1: Mi Mi Khaing I-5 (no date) ~~1946~~ API Burma
Burmese AP4

(15)

CHAPTER THREE

MY mother, as I have said, was the fair young jewel of her father's eye; and my grandfather had flashes of the most radical behaviour. Though he refused to learn English and this irreligious language was never spoken in his house, he suddenly decided to send my mother to learn English, not just as a second language, nor even to spend a few years at a totally English-speaking school—for an accomplishment, as a few other Burmese girls of the time did—but to study seriously until she passed the High School Standard of a European Code school which did all its teaching in English. My mother was thus the first Burmese Buddhist woman to pass the High School Examination in the European Code, and today she can speak faultless English though she never uses it unless necessary, and can even read some of the books of Virginia Woolf, although she does not like them. She and her two young brothers were sent to Moulmein; they stayed at the house of my eldest uncle who had settled there, and my mother attended an American Baptist Mission School. This was just before 1900. 177 871 562

My father, in the meantime, had arrived in Moulmein at the same time as my mother. The world had opened for him suddenly. After the strict and simple life of the monastery he found himself a smart young man with a Western crop and a collared shirt and outer jacket. He carefully put away his mother's ring to be put on again only on his visits back to Ye; he found a big and busy town to range in and no anxious mother waiting at home. I think it was during these years that my father got his love of all the sweet pleasures of life. A non-smoker and a teetotaller, he was one of the most spontaneously happy people. He loved food and many friends, to see young people happy and free from discipline, to spend all his resources in order to create happiness around him; he glorified the ability to think and work quickly and leave the maximum time for eating and laughing. 000

Particularly in this, Moulmein appealed to him. Having grown up in the monastic system of education by memorizing, he was bewildered at a system which prescribed a whole year of full-day studies for five or six thin text-books. As soon as he could read and understand he committed all his year's text-books to memory within a month, and could not conceive that there was anything else to be learnt unless they prescribed fresh books to be memorized. During school hours he wrote an Arith- 177, 87 876

Europeans

177. metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot
87 books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions
876 and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day
when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods of education. He also went across to the American Mission School where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in this way he met my mother.

873 My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My
593 father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon
● 562 College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work
582 to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two
youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to Intermediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

647 He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service,
177. which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for
65 Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grandmother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married.
582 But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myookship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwegyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me.* My mother, who has never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in change, and wired back *Yes.*

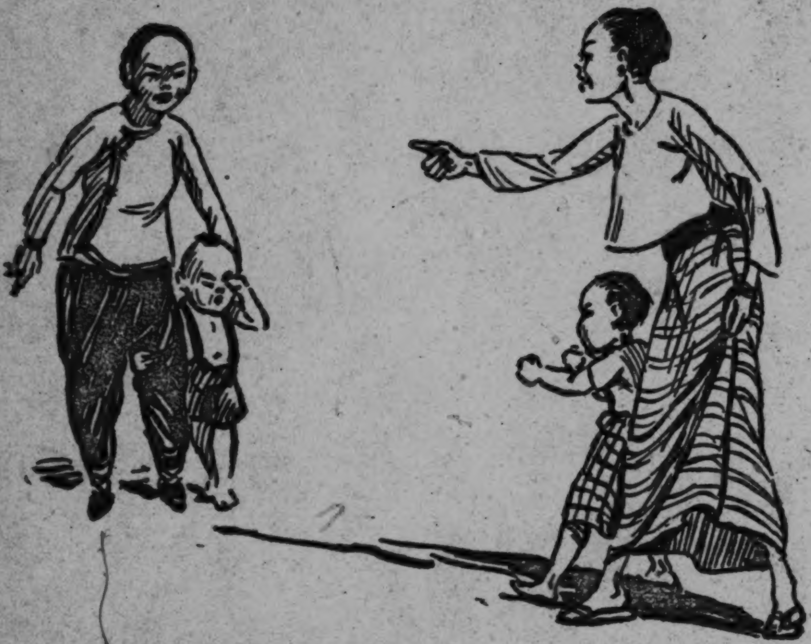
584 Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

and full dress on a cushion, the centre of the crowd of people who have 881 been invited for feasting, to have the ears pierced with a gold pin and 585 after this always to wear diamond ear-rings, but the ceremony has no deeper significance than that the parent feels he has done the best for his daughter at this stage of her life. The shinbyu, however, is much more than a social event. It has a religious meaning of the fullest beauty.

Although the women of Burma figure as actively and have the 562 same rights as men in the fields of business, property, and professions 784 of the modern world, we always keep alive in us the religious feeling that we are "below" mankind. 789 It is not so much a feeling that women are a lower race as that a man has the nobility of manhood in him. We call it *hpon*, the glory, the holiness of a man, and we respect this not with subservience but with the same feelings as we respect monks and parents. A wife does not throw her longyi across her husband's bed, she does not touch any of his possessions with her feet in carelessness, she uses a separate mug for her bathwater. A bad wife who does not respect her husband's manhood does him the greatest harm, for a man cannot prosper if his hpon is hampered; indeed, some women who indulge in black magic deliberately *hpon-nein* their husbands, that is, lower his hpon by carelessly wielding brooms above his head, throwing women's longyis on his pillow, thus making him subordinate, and believing that this makes the wife's will prevail over the husband's. But such a man can never make progress in his career.

It is the Buddhist belief that the attainment of a perfect life is as a 779 man, as shown in Gautama Buddha's life as Prince Siddhartha. Prince Siddhartha was the son of King Suddhodana, who surrounded his son with all the luxury and splendour that his kingdom on the slopes of the Himalayas could offer. To prevent his son from renouncing his princely life for one of poverty and meditation he kept all sights of sorrow, sickness and decay hidden from him. He found him a perfect wife, beautiful, meek and affectionate, who bore him a son; but the prince in his excursions to a park in the city came across a decrepit old man, a sick old man and a corpse, which sights made him sad at the thought of human misery in this world. The next time, however, he saw a hermit which suggested that peace of mind was achievable by renunciation of the vanities of the world. On the night that his son was born, Prince Siddhartha made the Great Renunciation and left everything to go into solitude and find out the cause of misery, and the means of its removal. The Dhammapada says of the world:

> Come! behold this world which is like a decked royal chariot, wherein the foolish immerse themselves; but for the wise there is no attachment.



previous child, the ta-yok chi-thay-ma had frantically grabbed a piece of charcoal and had smudged the arm of the dying child, saying: "If I get this child back in my next labour, may I know her by this mark." Down below the arum bushes grew close and dark against the fence. They had frightened us, like green snakes that must not be touched, because the leaves made your tongue itch with an intangible and incurable itch although the roots were made into delicious soups. In Grandfather's bedroom was a window looking into the maternity chamber, still padlocked with a lock whose key had been lost nearly twenty years ago, and a patch of light wood nailed over the hole which a robber had made with the point of his damyaung. From the maternity chamber, also, an aunt had thrown a basin of washing water to splash on an uncle sitting below, with whom she had quarrelled and whose hpon would be lowered by the ignobility of the woman's labour. For my mother the house must have had sharp memories, but she never spoke of them while there because my father became ill shortly after. This oppressed her spirits, and made her think only with sorrow of her dead mother and father, her brothers and sisters, so many now dead and the rest scattered far and never returning after the death of Grandfather.

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563
776
[137]
[562]

Yenangyaung oilfields, support of Ministers, and the indifference of 873 the less worthy sections of University staff and students towards the 668 nationalist movement.

The crowning event of my years there was the great strike of 1936 when about 600 students got into buses just before the final examinations and encamped themselves on the slopes of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda hill, with much sympathy and material support from the public, the men returning every morning to picket the black-leg examination candidates by lying across all exits and entrances—a completely successful technique, for it is an unthinkable insult to a Buddhist male to have his body trodden [577] on, and no Burman, or Burma Indian or Chinese for that matter, will dare to inflict such an insult. Some of the strikers felt, after the rallying speeches in the Union, that they were striking to evict an immoral member of the staff who had the support of the Principal whom they considered an autocrat; others knew that definite demands had been put forward for the amendment of the University Act, the ultimate result of which would be to make this Principal more accountable to Burmese political leaders; a great majority felt a wave of unnameable exaltation as they stormed hall after hall for recruits, ringing bells and shouting, "Come on, sisters, the day of freedom has arrived at last!" and almost all banged and cheered as they drove away, on the roofs, the steps and the wheels of the buses, at the thought of no examinations that year, and the exciting days of picketing ahead. But it was a tragic and unhappy time for some who did not have money to waste on another year before graduation and who trusted that the authorities would succeed in holding the examinations, or for others who did not join out of personal loyalties of the moment and who had friends and brothers with impassioned convictions on the other side. I shall always remember the face of my friend Ko Ohn, as he refused to let a doctor into Inya Hall to attend to a sick non-striker, his good face so full of distress and his longyi all smudged with the melted tarmac of the road in which he had been lying under the hot March sun. "Please, we must do it," he said; "I am so thirsty and my head is aching, but we must do it for our country."

One of the reasons for the focussing of public interest on the University 873 students was the great interest taken in the development of the 562 young women there. The male students, like the public, were not interested in them only for reasons of courtship or companionship, but took 179 a keen objective interest in them. It has been said of Burma that she has no feminist movements because none have been necessary; the women have always had all the rights they wanted. But it goes further than that. Burmese men take a sincere pride in the achievements of a woman who can successfully invade spheres outside her domestic tasks.

873 Far from the medical and legal professions presenting a closed phalanx
562 to the first women seeking to enter, Burmans love to introduce their
178 distinguished women as "the first lady doctor" and "the first lady barrister". On the other hand they demand that on no account shall a woman take on mannish and immodest behaviour and outlook with her new abilities. Allowances will be made, if necessary, for weaker constitutions, extra time spent on the making of a formal sadone hair style before attending work, or for soft voices.

Hence, in University College, where there was a generation of adolescent girls, some of whom had never before been to Rangoon from their district schools, the greatest interest was taken in their line of development—their scholastic success, their interest in or indifference to politics and nationalism, the degree of their response to Westernizing influences, their clothes and their morals—and yet the most censorious interest was not to be taken as personal or malicious. It was concern for the future of Burmese womanhood, we were told. Thus no woman student had any private life or anonymity. Whatever characteristics she possessed were taken up by a few who were interested in those particular qualities and then received the attentions of the great body of men students who only wanted something to sharpen their wit on. The height of this interfering concern, on the part of young men, for the moral welfare of young women was reached in 1940 when a petition was seriously put up to the Principal of University College, by a number of students, that certain young women be ordered to shorten the shoulder straps of the ornamental bodices worn under the transparent jackets. So sincere was their solicitude that the Principal felt constrained to refer the matter to the Warden of the Women's Hall for action.

But the young men were not stinting in approval either, even though the majority expressed it in loud good-natured chaff. In fact, for a keen interest in politics, for wit, for exquisite coyness or a proud beauty, the girls in University College were in as much limelight as can surround a rugger hero at an English University. And indeed, the word "hero" was used for them because the word "heroine" could not be shouted in Burmese euphony. Hence, if a report had gone abroad that a girl had swum the 2,000 yards of the cross-lake track, or had harangued a group of young men for bad manners, or was coming to a lecture with her hair in an informal knot at the back of her head instead of a formal sadone, she was greeted on entrance by a hundred odd youths stamping and cheering and jeering and all shouting, "Hero! Hero!"

873 No wonder there was love everywhere. Even in modern Rangoon
562 an unmarried young man and woman could not be seen without the
883 presence of a third person, but sentimental love flourished all the more

for that. It surged up amongst all the back benches of the lecture rooms 873 and flowed into the corridors where the poor stricken couples blushed 562 and spoke in whispers in spite of the applause of all passers-by. It 883 flowed along the shores of the Inya Lake on whose banks the girls walked in groups of two or three after their evening bath and toilet, and the youths walked in other bands until they met and spoke to the girls. Particularly on the fine evenings of the first monsoon or the first cool dry weather after the deluge had spent itself, the shores of Inya Lake presented a scene of the greatest human felicity. All that was sweet in life seemed to be collected there—youth and pretty faces, fine Burmese silks and newly washed hair, anticipations of joyful meetings, the clear calm water and the brilliant evening sky, the islands in the distance and the bands of young men singing sad songs by the water's edge.

Dramatic entertainment was very rich at the University. It was 873 rarely that the students themselves performed in musical concerts or 536 stage dancing, but troupes of actors were hired to give performances at all celebrations of sports victories, scholastic successes, farewells to popular tutors who had got into government service, or celebrations of religious festivals. The traditional Burmese stage-play is the *zat-pwè*, the staging of one of a few well-known stories, based mainly on the Jatakas which are stories showing incarnations of the Buddha in his various existences on this earth. Such were the *Wethandaya Zat*, the *Mahaw Zat*, of U Kyin U, the stories of Buddha's life as Prince Wethandaya and as Mahaw, son of a rich nobleman. Written in this form all zats, whether based on the Jatakas or not, contained episodes to provide King and Minister scenes, doleful partings and the weeping dirge of the heroine, scenes of clowning, of sorcerers and heavenly spirits and, highlight of all, the happy meeting scene of the Prince-Hero and the Princess-Heroine, when they sing and dance and joke with the attendant characters, singly and together, for a whole hour or two maybe, while they and the audience forget the thread of the story in the wonderful agile dancing of the hero, his feet falling as softly and as lightly as a kitten's paws but with all the speed, the unexpected turns, the beauty of body and of costume, which make the male zat dancer the essence of the national gaiety. In our time, the old zat plays are treated much as the miracle plays of Elizabethan England probably were—the plot is there, but each company of actors uses the play to hold its own songs, dances and comic lines. The zat lasts for hours, all the night through until sunrise, but the form of it is such that the audience sees it as episodes against a known background of plot, and can thus eat, talk or even doze during the tedious connecting scenes and sit up in enthralled silence for the first appearance of the hero, the duet dances, the songs of the heroine.

running with unholy energy and two small boys streaking after them 525 shouting: "My hpongyi! Hey, my hpongyi!"

The showy vanity of Rangoon was seen at its greatest at wedding 585 celebrations where no woman of any standing came without a full load 511 of jewellery, either owned or borrowed for the occasion. For weddings of families like ours hundreds of invitations had always to be sent out owing to the tradition of acknowledging distant relationships and connections. It would be considered rude also not to invite the friends among clerks and traders from every town in which my father had been posted during our growing-up years.

Marriage is a social contract in Burma. To be married one needs 581 no recourse to legal or priestly officers. The *let-htat*, laying of hands 582 one on the other, can be performed in the presence of elders, or a feast can 428 be given to a few people to obtain recognition of the married state. This is done after elopements, for example, when the parents have become reconciled and the young couple is too shy to go through the pantomime of a marriage ceremony. For divorce, also, no legal procedure is necessary, but convention makes divorces rare. Although monogamy is almost universal in Burma, polygamy is not forbidden by the law. A "mistress" of a married man is considered a sort of wife, but the disapproval with which this is regarded is shown in the term applied to her: *ma-ya-nga*, lesser wife. But the liberty operates both ways, and in the rare cases of a woman who runs to a second husband without any agreement having been reached beforehand, she is said to have a *lin-ngè*, lesser husband. The lack of legal safeguards of a woman's position as the only wife is amply compensated for by the rulings of Burmese Buddhist Law as regards her property. She retains sole ownership of whatever property she brings to the marriage, and on the dissolution of the marriage is entitled to half of all the additions of wealth since the marriage. Neither can an irate husband make a will leaving his money to other relatives and strangers. Wills are forbidden by law; children inherit equal shares of the parents' legacy, except in the cases where there are more than four children in the family. Then the eldest takes one-quarter before the rest is divided equally amongst the other children. On the death of one parent the surviving parent still has sole ownership of half the property. The other half is open to division among the children, but it is only a black sheep which will insist on division while one parent is still alive.

When I had been home but a month, my brother appealed to me 584 for help in arranging the matter of his marriage. His difficulty was that he had no wish to marry the various dowried young women with whom my relatives were trying to contract him; he had chosen his own bride but at the same time the stern array of cousins, aunts and uncles in our

forced to shed them piece by piece, with the bitter realization that they 722
could not be saved. But war raged like a forest fire which creeps to the farthest corner; like a deluge which rises to the highest hills, for people went northwards and northwards, and still found no sanctuary.

Another thing that filled us with wretchedness was the feeling that all the activity of a normal life would cease. The people who thought reasonably in the face of the quick Japanese onrush, that the British would probably have to get out but would prepare, perhaps in India, and be able to return one day, expected to spend the next few years in quiet and hiding from danger. The average person just felt vaguely stunned, that now there would be a negation of all social and economic endeavour; he could not visualize any quick restoration of even a shell of the machinery of normal life which was so alarmingly disappearing before his eyes. Symbolic of this was the emptying of schools and colleges in Rangoon within the day on which the news of Pearl Harbour came through. I shall never forget the effect on my young sisters and their friends. They cried with grief as their parents came to take them home, parting them from friends, sweethearts, all companions of youth, books and the outside world, at best to go into the jungle and live as though they had never known a world looking towards Europe.

I was twenty-five when war broke out, and caught me up, in late 000
February 1942, in a compulsory sea evacuation carried out by the military authorities. I felt as though my heart would break against this awful machine which had suddenly made us so unimportant, and which did not care that I was a Burman amidst the crowd of foreign women it was evacuating, taking me from mother and sisters to whom I could not get news or explanation of my desertion.

As we left Inya Hall with lights ablaze, fans full on, store-rooms thrown wide open and waiting for the invader, a vast and inexpressible sadness settled upon me. Dawn had not yet broken, and only the glare from Kemmendine fires still lighted the sky. How sad, how black and empty each familiar house-face looked, with shut eyes and shuttered doors. It was Goodbye indeed, for though the flames are dying now, we shrink from contemplating the charred desolation that we must see on our return.

But it would have been Goodbye in any case for another, happier 563
reason; for I had just met my husband who would have carried me off 562
to a different world in the farthermost corner of Burma, the Kengtung State of Shans, in a land of mountains, narrow valleys and pine trees, where simple people with rosy cheeks cultivate the hillsides and address the ruling family as "Heavenly", where women are not heard, but seen in meekness to obey and fear their husbands. That is another story.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Shan AP 11

S B 305 751 563 they mutter spells and incomprehensible incantations over the "medicine," are looked up to with profound belief and a very considerable deal of awe.

B 304 531 ↑ The tattooing on the loins and legs is universal with all Burmans, and nothing more is ordinarily required; but there are very few who have not charms of some kind tattooed on the arms, back, chest, or even on the top of the head, which is shaved for the purpose. These figures are of all kinds—lizards, birds, mystic words and squares, rings, images of the Buddha, and sometimes merely a few scattered dots, the latter especially on the face, between the eyes, over the ears, or on the chin. The colouring matter is almost always vermilion, with drugs and solutions, according to requirement, mingled with it. The blue dye from the lampblack never disappears, but the red colour of the vermilion gradually fades away and vanishes. Nevertheless figures of this kind, more or less distinct, are to be found on Burmans of all ages, so great is the national superstition. Even the town B [852] youths, whose limbs are smooth and "unbreeched" as a girl's, are never without some charms of this kind, if it is only the a-nu se, which enables a man to gain the woman he loves. This "drug of tenderness" is composed of vermilion mixed with a variety of herbs and curious things, prominent B [825] [101] among which is the bruised, dry skin of the tauktè, the trout-spotted gekko, whose sonorous cry and fidelity to the house where he establishes himself and brings luck, are well known to all who have visited Burma or Siam. It is very sparingly used, a few round spots arranged in the shape of a triangle being of sufficient virtue to ensure the object aimed at. The commonest place for them is between the eyes, B 305 ● 562 832 but occasionally the se sayā recommends the lips, or even the tongue, and his advice is always followed. This is the only tattooing which women ever have executed on them, and there are not many of them who have it done. The patient is usually a love-sick maiden who is afraid the object of her affection will escape from her, or a girl whom rolling years warn that she must be quick if she would not be condemned to remain an a-pyo heing, an old maid. Except in very desperate cases, however, they always manage to persuade the operator to place the charm on some part of the

body where it will not be visible. If it is not effectual, there 305
is always open to them the signal afforded by kindly national 562
custom to maidens longing for a mate. They cut off the 832
lappets of hair, the bya-bazan, hanging over the ears, and the
significance is the same as the white heather of the language
of flowers, "heart for sale." In Rangoon the tattooing of a [563]
woman has a special signification, not recognised elsewhere. [369]
It means that she wants an Englishman for a husband.
Poor thing!

Another very universal kind of tattooing is that with 305
a-hpi se. Almost every schoolboy in the country has a 751
specimen of this on him, for does it not prevent him from
feeling the pain when he is caned? No amount of falsified
hopes in the experience of friends will persuade him that
it may not be effectual in his case, and a flogging is often
courted as an immediate test of its efficacy. Pride repels
the inquiries of chums as to the results, but the experimenter
is usually very well behaved for some time. In the case
of older men the a-hpi se acts as a talisman against bullets,
sword cuts, and ills of that kind. Allied to this are the 751
thenat hpi, which soldiers and dacoits carry about with them. 701
These are the horns of buffaloes and other animals, which 674
may be plain, but are usually elaborately carved with figures 531
according to fancy. They must be quite solid down to the
root. A hollow or flaw of any kind deprives them of their
virtue. While the man has such a talisman in his hands
he cannot be killed. A monkey is a very favourite image
to have carved in this way on a sword or dagger hilt, the
reference being to the tale of the Ramayana. Of a similar 304
nature are talismans which are especially used by soldiers 751
and dacoits. These hkaung-beit-set are charmed or consecrated 701
objects let into the flesh under the skin. They are of 674
various kinds. Some are gold, silver, or lead; others curious
pebbles, pieces of tortoise-shell, or bits of horn, all of them
with incantations of mystic character written on them.
Many famed dacoits have long rows and curves of them over
the chest, showing in little knobs through the skin. When
they get into English prisons, an energetic jailer has been
known to cut them out, lest they should be pieces of gold or
silver, or perhaps precious stones, with which the turnkeys

CHAPTER IV

EAR-BORING

881 304 THE first great event in a Burmese girl's life is the nā-twin mingala, the boring of her ears. She is not out of the doll stage till that happens. She may have toddled after her mother to the market with a basket of fruit on her head, long before the ear-boring, but that ceremony is as much an epoch to her as putting on the yellow robe, or getting his legs tattooed, is to her brother. 882 562 832 Ever afterwards she will look upon every male as a possible lover. No more taking alternate whiffs at a big green cheroot with little Maung Po; no more teasing Po Shan to let her have a taste of those fine nettè mangoes his father has got down from Mandalay; no more dawdling about the streets by herself, watching the small boys playing with the round gôn nyin seeds, or having a hurried glimpse of the puppet play, while she is supposed to be at home looking after the house with her little brother. When she walks out now it will be with her mother, or an aunt, or married sister, as a chaperone; and if she goes to the play it will be in formal procession, and with all her finest clothes on. Nothing like getting the ears bored to set a girl thinking about the wave of the hair that falls down in lappets by her ears, or the best recipe for the fragrant straw-coloured thanaka, with which she tints her face and charms half the senses of the gallants. It even alters her walk. She sets about practising the coquettish sway of the body in walking, which is considered so attractive, and which a philosophical matter-of-fact Darwinian would probably declare was first of all due to an involuntary throwing out of the heel with each step to keep the folds of the dress

modestly closed in front, and to prevent the dainty slipper, 882
just covering her toes and no more, from slipping off the 562
foot. However that may be, it is an accomplishment indispensable 832
to a Burmese belle. She takes as much pains over
it as she does with her jetty tresses. In a word, the nā-twin 881
mingala transforms the girl into a woman, just as much as 562
admission to a monastery makes the boy a man. It is her 832
baptism, and is the distinctive mark of her race. Most of
the men get their ears bored too, but the ceremony is not so
solemn with them, and latterly is not so universal, at any
rate not in the towns on the coast. 881

The ceremony takes place at the age of twelve or 304
thirteen, just when the girl has attained puberty in fact. [145]
Her sadā is submitted to a soothsayer, that a fortunate day [787]
and hour may be chosen, and that being fixed, a great feast is prepared, and all the friends of the family and the relations are invited. An invitation to an ear-boring feast is a very urgent matter. No one can refuse without a very good excuse, and serious business is often postponed to the demands of such a ceremony. Everybody comes early, and sits down in any place he can find round about the front part and sides of the room, the girl, with all her female relatives about her, reclining on a mat at the back. The bedin sayā stalks about gazing at a mysterious strip of palm-leaf, or apparently wrapped in deep thought. Beside him is the professional ear-borer. He carries the needles, which are almost always pure gold, and even in the case of the poorest, never of any baser metal than silver. Rich people very often have them set at the ends with precious stones. At last the soothsayer gives the sign that the favourable moment has arrived. The ear-borer moves up immediately and passes the needles through the lobe of the ear, sometimes using a cork as they do in England, but more often letting them pass between two of his fingers. The girl, who has been worked up into a high state of excitement and terror by all the preparations, usually struggles and shrieks as hard as she can, but the women round about hold her down, and the band of music in the street outside strikes up a rapid movement and drowns her lamentations, while all the visitors burst into a flood of talk

hollow pipes of glass, coloured in a variety of tints. The 301
shape is somewhat peculiar, a slight irregular concave, if I 565
may be allowed the expression, the front being a little larger
in diameter than the back. Some of the princesses wore
very costly na-daung, the diamonds, and especially the rubies,
for which Burma is celebrated, being exceedingly fine. The 301
men, except those of high rank, very seldom wear them, 562
unless on exceptional feast days. Women ordinarily put
them on whenever they go out. Poor people keep the holes
open with a roll of paper or cloth. A *chic* damsel very often
courts attention by carrying spare cheroots dangling from
her lobes. Elder women who subordinate personal appearance
to bodily comforts usually do the same thing on a
journey. It secures them a smoke whenever they may want
it, and the huge green cheroots are not easily carried in the
penetralia of the Burmese female dress, while if they were in
the travelling box, they might be abstracted by unscrupulous
youngsters.

It is curious to notice how much the custom is falling 301
into disuse in the larger towns with the men. Even among 562
the wealthier classes you seldom see a man wearing a na-daung 369
of the largest size. Those of the thickness of a pencil 178
or a little less are still common, but they too probably will
pass out of use shortly. Yet this used to be looked upon
as the distinctive mark of Burmese nationality. Probably,
nowadays, the tattooing is considered sufficient; while the
ear-plugs were certainly inconvenient things, and afforded
obvious attractions to robbers. But with the women ear-boring
is still universal, and probably will continue so as long
as the men go on tattooing, notwithstanding the pain of the
process. The na-daung are as characteristic of the Burmese
women as the flapping tamein.

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE

538 IN the Lawkanidi, the book of proverbs relating to
581 ordinary life, it is said that monks and hermits are beautiful
when they are lean; four-footed animals when they are fat;
men when they are learned; and women when they are
● 562 married. This recommendation to the married state is no
428 more needed by Burmese maidens than it is by their sisters
421 in other parts of the world, and they have the further inducement that they enjoy a much freer and happier position
than in any other Eastern country, and in some respects
are better off even than women in England. All the money
and possessions which a girl brings with her on marriage are
kept carefully separate for the benefit of her children or
heirs, and she carries her property away with her if she is
divorced, besides anything she may have added to it in the
interim by her own trading or by inheritance. Thus a
married Burmese woman is much more independent than
562 any European even in the most advanced states. In the
584 eyes of the Dammathat the old idea of the *patria potestas*
prevails indeed, and woman is regarded as a simple chattel,
belonging entirely to her parents, and to be disposed of by
them without any reference to her personal inclinations;
but, as a matter of fact, she may do pretty well as she
pleases, may marry the youth on whom she has fixed her
affections, and may separate herself from the husband who
has offended her, by going before the village elders and
stating her case; and if the complaint is just, her request
is never refused.

As yet they have not begun to demand an equal share

As yet they[1] have not begun to demand an equal share 562 of education with the boys, and the only accomplishments 871 most Burmese girls know are how to dress neatly, do up their hair, and powder their faces. This is the single open implication of their inferiority—except in worship at the [775] pagoda, when every woman will pray that in another existence she may be a man—and it is not likely that female education will make much progress for another generation, the popular idea in Burma being that learning is no use to a girl when she has it, and she may, consequently, as well devote all her spare time to making herself look as pretty as possible. Here and there are a few who are deeply learned in Burmese literature. The young wife of one of the most prominent living Burman pleaders in Rangoon has as good a knowledge of the sacred books and as great a fluency in repeating Pali rituals as any pôngyi in the country. But the great majority of girls only know what they pick up from the conversation of their brothers and the men who come about the house. 562 It is therefore greatly to their credit that they manage not only house affairs, but their husband's [432] business into the bargain. A farmer's wife will carry out the sale of the whole rice crop to the agent of an English rice firm in her husband's absence, and generally strikes a better bargain than he would have made himself. If the village head constable is away, the wife will get together the policemen, stop a fight, arrest the offenders, and send them off to the lock-up all on her own responsibility. The wife sits by, no matter what public business is being transacted, and very often puts in her own opinion quite as a matter of course; 562 in fact, she is virtual master of the house, and henpecked 581 husbands are not by any means uncommon. 643 The last king of Burma, Thibaw Min, was a notable instance. 175 There never was a king of Burma before who remained for three years the husband of one wife. It was not inclination in his case. He had quite a number of *amourettes*; but the sturdy Supayā Lat and her formidable mother soon got the offending damsels out of the way. There is also little doubt that it was Supayā Lat and her mother who suggested the massacre of the Princes and prompted the defiance of the British Government, which brought about the ending of the Burmese monarchy.

[1] [i.e., girls--ANALYST]

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According to the laws of Menu there are three ways in which a marriage can be brought about:—

1. When the parents of the couple give them to one another.

2. When they come together through the good offices of a go-between, called an aungthwè.

3. When they arrange the matter between themselves.

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It is understood, of course, that the two latter forms require at least the passive consent of the father, or, if he is dead, of the guardian, mother, brother, sister, uncle, or whoever it may be; every woman—every young woman at any rate—being necessarily under the protection of somebody. The Dammathat says: "Let the man to whom she is given by her nearest relation be her husband. If the parents or the relations of the girl do not give her away, and she is carried off against their will, even if she has had ten children, they have power to cause her to separate from the man and give her to another; the man has no right to say that she is his wife. Why is this? Because a daughter belongs to her parents?" But, on the other hand, "If a young woman runs off with a young man not approved by her parents, and, having concealed herself for some time, shall return to the village or neighbourhood in which her parents live, and have two or three children, or live there five or ten years with the man after her parents have seen and known of her being there, they shall not have power to cause her to separate from her husband."

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According to the old system, the young man was not considered of age to marry till he was twenty-four or twenty-five. The age of the girl was always a matter of no consequence as long as she had attained to puberty. When a youth wanted to marry he told his parents, and they went to the father and mother of the young woman of his choice. If these had no objections, then the young man kept company with the girl, had the run of the house for two or three years, so that they might get to know one another well, and then, if they were still of one mind, the question of dowry was settled, a fortunate day and hour fixed upon, and the marriage carried out. Nowadays such formalities are almost

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entirely dispensed with. If the parents of both houses are agreeable, the contracting parties get married with most ardent lover-like rapidity. The age, too, has become very much younger. Most lads get married when they are eighteen or nineteen; thirteen or fourteen is a common age for the girls. Runaway marriages are common enough, and though the parents may be angry, they are usually too easy-going and indolent to take any energetic action in the matter, and let the couple find out their mistake and come and ask for pardon and a house to live in, which is seldom refused. 184 583 464 591 Occasionally in Lower Burma a stern father demands that they shall be separated until the lad has got a situation for himself, but this is ordinarily little more than a mere form of speech. In Upper Burma, where food is scarce and working hands more valuable, the husband is brought to the girl's parents' house and made to do his share towards supporting the household.

584 [444] [562] ●

The preliminary courting is naturally conducted in the old fashion, best known to those who have had experience of their own in such matters. The parties meet at pwès, the girl perhaps selling cheroots, fried garlic, le'pet, and what not, and therefore being readily accessible to any swain. It must not be supposed that keeping a stall is regarded as anything derogatory. Numbers of perfectly well-to-do women set them up regularly; some even have daily work in the bazaars, and very often a girl commences occupations of the kind with the view of attracting the young men and securing a husband. Then there are meetings at pagoda feasts, in the zayats and at friends' houses, so that there are plenty of chances of introduction to eligible swains, even without calling in the assistance of the aungthwè. This functionary makes it a regular occupation to know all the attractions, physical and sordid, of all the young women in the place, and for a small consideration, or sometimes merely for love of his trade, brings young couples together and arranges places of meeting for them. He is, of course, most useful where an impecunious youth aspires to the hand of a rich merchant's or high official's daughter. He manages an introduction in a roundabout way to avoid rousing suspicions, praises his client's appearance and

584 abilities, contrives a series of unexpected meetings, and does everything, in fact, to further the project. There are regular practitioners in the business, and others who dabble in it for want of something to do and from sheer love of scheming.

Courting, whether authorised by the parents or not, is very seldom carried on in daylight. So much is this the case that the phrase Lu-byo hlè thi achein, "Courting time," is commonly used in ordinary conversation to designate nine o'clock at night, or a little before or after. The time may be due to the fact that occupation, or the heat, prevent it during the day, but there is an old saw which may account [828] for it, to the effect that in the morning women are cross ● [562] and peevish; in the middle of the day they are testy and quarrelsome; but at night they are sweet and amiable. Authorised courtship, if the term is not too unromantic, is always carried on at this time, and preparations for it are duly made by the girls. A couple of hours after nightfall the lover, with a friend or two, makes his appearance near the house and dawdles up and down till he finds the old people have gone to bed, or retired from the scene. Then he goes up the steps along with his supporters and finds the girl alone, or with a companion or two, dressed in her best, with flowers in her hair, powder on her cheeks and neck, and generally prepared for conquest. The old people are never present, though they can hear everything, and the mother, as I am credibly informed, pauk-kyi thi, has a convenient chink in the bamboo walls through which she can survey operations and prevent too ardent love-making. Interviews vary in length, and the nature of the conversation may be best left to the imagination. If one of the accompanying young men has also an appointment that evening he naturally endeavours to curtail his friend's philandering as much as possible, in order that he himself may have the more time in another place to press his suit. Even in clandestine flirtations the courting is always effected in a formal way like this. Meetings in lover's loans, or *à quatre yeux*, would ruin a girl's character immediately. Her own mother would be the first to put the worst construction on such doings.

Burman is always very kind to his wife, while every girl is 586 taught from her earliest years to look with the highest 593 respect upon man as man, and to defer in all things to his 562 judgment, though she is far more free than the Indian wife. The Burman consults with his partner in all his affairs, public and private, and often is entirely guided by her. She keeps the shop that is to be found in almost every house in the country towns, and usually makes far more money than the goodman himself. It is a simple matter to blame the 586 Burmese for easy marriage customs, but the system speedily puts an end to unhappy and ill-assorted unions, and illegitimate children are exceedingly rare. Finally, unless there is good known cause for a separation the divorced parties are not by any means looked upon with a favourable eye. The man who enters a monastery to get rid of a wife goes by the contemptuous name of taw-twet "jungle runaway," for the rest of his life, while the ta-ku-lat, the *divorcée*, is a perennial subject of joke to the jester in the play:—

> She that's neither maid, married, nor widow,
> Fits all men as a pot does it's lid, O.

That is to say, a divorced woman needs small wooing. Such a woman will not hesitate to cut off the bya-bazan, the lappets of hair that fall down over the ears, the last resource of the despairing and unwilling celibate.

The literature of marriage is not inconsiderable. The 581 tattooing ceremonies, a-nu se, love-philtres, charms, and 828 what not, are referred to elsewhere. There remain a number of singular matters to be taken note of by those who would be happy in married life. Thus the girls are told how they may ascertain a man's character by the colour of his heart's blood—though how they are to ascertain this colour without injury to the subject of inquiry is not mentioned. A lustful man's blood is dark red; a cross, quarrelsome man's is so dark as almost to be black; a lazy man's like elephant's water; a rough-speaking man's like boiled peas: a charitable man's like the flower of the mahā hlega, a species of bauhinia; while a learned man's heart's blood is beautiful as the ruby.

Similarly useless knowledge is the statement that an

Be 532 tells us that the American Indian chief was in a state of
BeBa great alarm lest his soul might be carried off with his
[532] picture. A notion of the same kind appears in the Chinese
[774] custom of getting a priest to put in the pupil of the eye, a
method which often has rather a ghastly effect when the
reverend gentleman is not skilful. Similarly, every Chinese-
owned craft, from the sampan to the English-built iron screw
steamer, has a couple of eyes painted on its bows, in order
that it may see the way. Down in the Straits, and in all
places where there are many Chinese, the local steamers,
whoever their owners may be, are all endowed with eyes.
Were they not so favoured, no Chinaman would travel with
them as a passenger, or send any of his goods aboard of
them. The Burman is not troubled with any such fantastic
notions, and has no objection whatever to sitting for his
Be portrait, only, as King Mindôn said to Yule, they prefer
532 a flattering likeness to an exact one. It is seldom, however,
353 that a Burman has a picture gallery in his house, and the
village artist usually confines himself to vivid-coloured
sketches for the funeral of a pôngyi, or to be hung round
the mandut, where the great people sit to look on at a
play. The drawing and the perspective are naturally a little
faulty, but the details are usually worked out with very
creditable skill.

517 Thus wandering about, seeing what his neighbours are
doing, with an occasional visit to the monastery to have
some edifying talk with the religious, the villager may
spend the time very comfortably. Oftenest however, he
stays at home, and waits for visitors to drop in and have a
592 little gossip. The goodwife always has a little shop in the
444 lower part of the building. There is hardly a single house
● 562 in the whole village where something is not offered for
sale: a few dried fish, betel-nut, with the fresh green leaves,
lime, cardamoms, and cutch, all ready for making up, half a
dozen cocoa-nuts, or perhaps some twopenny-ha'penny knives,
looking-glasses, coloured tumblers, and paltry Manchester
goods, or where there are many girls about the house, a few
home-made lungyis and pasos, waist-cloths, woven at odd
[286] times in the loom which stands in the yard or in a corner
of the verandah of every house. The stock-in-trade is

intended more as an excuse for people to enter the house and 592
have a talk than with any idea of making a profit. What- 444
ever money is drawn is regarded as a kind of pin-money for 562
the mistress of the establishment. When the ladies of the
household are in earnest about trading, they start a stall in
the bazaar, and very good hands they are at driving a bargain. 592
A more regrettable trait is the forcible character of their 444
language when they are annoyed. But this, unhappily, is a 562
characteristic of the fair sex all the world over, whether in 195
trade or out of it. Certain it is that the *dames de la halle*
and the Billingsgate fishwives would require all their powers
of voice and vituperation to silence a bazaar maiden when
she sets her mind to it. 264

There are as a general thing two meals only in the day: 262
breakfast at about eight in the morning, and dinner at five
in the afternoon. There is no difference in the *menu* of the
two meals. The staple article of food is plain boiled rice,
which is piled up in a heap on a huge platter, round about
which the household arrange themselves, sitting, like pit-men,
on their heels. The curry which is taken with it is placed
in little bowls, and each one of the party has his own plate,
and helps himself. Knives are unnecessary; spoons and
forks and celestial chopsticks are unknown, except in the
houses of a few Government officials and traders in Rangoon,
who have had some experience of English society. Very
few are able to afford curries of meat or fish, besides that
there are not always unscrupulous people ready to disregard
the law against taking life, and the material is therefore not
always available. Ordinarily the curry consists of a soup,
or thin concoction of vegetables, in which chillies and onions
figure largely. The other ingredients are very various.
Young shoots of bamboo are very delicate in their flavour,
if not overpowered by too much garlic. Wild asparagus,
the succulent stems of a number of aquatic plants and fleshy
arums are constantly used, and may be seen exposed for sale
in every bazaar. Tamarind leaves and those of the mango-
tree are used by the very poor. The former have a some-
what acrid taste, the latter are curiously aromatic. Along 263
with the curry, which has always a large amount of oil and
salt in it, there are a variety of condiments, notably the

It rounds a girl's mouth a good deal when she puts it in. 276 In the manufacture of it chopped tobacco leaves and pieces of the stem of the tobacco plant and the pith of the oh'nè, a species of Euphorbia, are the chief ingredients. Very often these are boiled with palm-sugar and allowed to dry before making up. The cover is made of the leaf of the teak-tree, or of a tree called the thanat, the ends being tucked in at the point. A piece of red raw silk fastens it at the end put in the mouth, and some broader pieces of [565] pith are put there to give it stiffness to the lips. The finer kinds, such as were only used in Upper Burma in the palace, are rolled up in the thin white inner coating of the bark of the betel-tree. The cheroot has an ash like a cinder, and usually burns holes in the clothes of an Englishman the first time he tries it. Laid down thoughtlessly on an oily mat, it [562] is a fruitful cause of fires. All Burman ladies are adepts at rolling cheroots, and a dozen or two of them form a common present to favoured swains.

Chewing betel is sometimes carried on simultaneously with smoking, but most people prefer to economise enjoyment, and only chew in the interval between smokes. Chewing is hardly an exact expression, and the use of it frequently leads the experimenting Briton into the unpleasant predicament of having all the interstices between his teeth choked up with little fragments of the nut, which, with their indescribable aromatic flavour, stimulate the flow of saliva for hours afterwards. The Burman splits his nut in half, smears a little slaked lime, usually white, but sometimes tinted pink or salmon coloured, on the betel vine leaf, puts in a little morsel of cutch and tobacco, and then rolls it up and stows away the quid in the side of his mouth, occasionally *squeezing* it a little between his teeth. It is as well to be very cautious with the lime and cutch (the juice of the *Acacia catechu*) the first time you make a trial. The latter especially is very astringent. One variety of the nut, called the Taunggu betel, has effects very much resembling intoxication. Chewing kôn-thi is an unlovely practice. The [415] Burman has none of the delicacy with regard to a spittoon which characterises the American, and these articles require to be of a very considerable size. The monks are perhaps

792 respect paid to him by the king was paid, not as to the head
554 of the religion, but as to the personal teacher. The Burman
779 in his prayers, or rather his meditations for the good of others, prays for his teacher before his parents. The five pleasant things in the world are: the shade of trees, the shade of parents, the shade of teachers, the shade of princes, the shade of the Buddha.

It is this republican tendency of Buddhism that gives it such a wonderful hold on the people. Rank does not confer on the mendicant greater honour, or release him from any of his obligations. The most learned and famous Sadaw must go forth every morning to beg his daily food. If he is very aged and decrepit he may be excused to some extent, but every now and again he must totter forth to preserve the letter of the law and show a proper example of humility. His dress is the same as that of the most recently admitted ko-yin, and in the eyes of the world he holds honour, not because he controls the affairs of the assembly, but because he is so close to the verge of Ne'ban. This feeling extends beyond the order into ordinary life. The religion brings all men down to the same level. The poor man may be a king of nats in the next life; the wealthy sinner may frizzle in the awful pains of hell. There is no difference between man and man but that which is established by superiority in virtue;
● [562] and hence it is that the state of women among Buddhists is so very much higher than it is among Oriental peoples, who do not hold by that faith. The Burmese woman enjoys many rights which her European sister is even now clamouring for.

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771 We have seen that the whole male population of Burma enters the monastery, and that the great majority leave after a very short stay. Some, however, grow fond of the monastic ways, and remain to study and qualify themselves to be mendicants. In becoming pyin-sin they do not acquire any new spiritual power, nor do they constitute themselves directly teachers of the people. In a religious system, which acknowledges no supreme Deity, it is impossible for any one to intercede with a Creator whose existence is denied, in behalf of a man who can only attain to a higher state by his own pious life and earnest self-denial. The

favour with the Shans. The dyes are obtained from various 286
jungle seeds, roots, flowers, leaves, and barks; the yellow 283
dye obtained from the wood of the Jack-tree (*Artocarpus* 386
integrifolia) being reserved for the monkish robes. After
being dyed, the thread is unwound again. The weaving
machine is very much like the old hand-loom still occasionally [562]
seen in out-of-the-way parts of England. The
operators are almost always young women, and they are
very clever at working the treadle and shooting through the
shuttle, while talking all the time to village gossips or admiring
swains. Some of the tameins, made for the richer
women, are extremely intricate in pattern and require
between twenty and thirty shuttles. The treadle raises
and lowers the alternate threads of the warp. Except the
rough dresses and the most complicated in pattern, however,
not many native-made clothes are worn now. The [439]
townspeople prefer the showy and cheaper imported articles,
and, though the Manchester goods are too frequently
"doctored" and do not last long, yet this does not trouble
the Burman much, for he is fond of a change of dress, and,
unless he is very poor, will never wear a paso, except about [291]
the house, after it has been washed. All the more elaborate
designs are, however, native made. The "dog's tooth"
pattern is almost confined to Amarapura or Sagaing court
looms, and since the fall of the monarchy is hardly seen at
all. The acheit paso or tamein, of a complicated, wavy,
sprigged design, which middle-aged Burmans remember as
being the cherished object of desire of their young days, is
now considered rustic. Young Rangoon will tell you that
you may always know a taw-tha (a jungle wallah) at the
pagoda feast by his wearing an acheit paso and nothing
else except his turban; and although the waist-cloth may
cost from 150 to 400 rupees, that does not redeem it in the
town-bred youth's eyes.

536 devoted to scenes at court, and is adorned with a throne, golden umbrellas, and other royal insignia. The other extremity represents, with artfully-arranged twigs and tufts of grass, the jungle and forests to which, during some part of every play, the prince and princess are sure to have to fly. The puppets, which are frequently as much as two or three feet high, are always gorgeously and expensively dressed. [532] The larger ones are all cut in wood, and the carver's skill often turns out very clever presentments of rugged-faced old men and exuberantly jovial lubyets. 536 776 Most of the zāts, which deal greatly with the supernatural and fabulous, are only represented as yôkthe pwès. No amount of technical skill could represent in the public streets an athurein, a creature (destined incalculable ages hence to be a Budh) whose height is a few thousand miles, and who produces eclipses in his play by taking the sun or moon in his fingers or between his toes.

536 Curious as it may seem, the puppet players often acquire a far more really personal reputation than the legitimate actors. The zatthama mostly get a name for dancing as much as for anything else. The Yindaw Ma Le, who came from a village near Meiktila in Upper Burma, indeed, was equally celebrated for her voice and her graceful movements, but the yokthethama become renowned for dramatic fervour, for tender passion, for dry wit, just as thoroughly and personally as if they actually appeared before the audience. Except the *prima donna* just alluded to (now dead) there are few professionals celebrated on the stage who are not far better known as first-class marionette players. These performers are all men and boys. ● [562] None of the female parts are ever taken by women. Maung Tha Byaw was unequalled in "prince's" parts. He was recognised as Thabinwun; every stage-manager, every zat-ôk in the country received his word as law. No tenor with a *voce fenomenale*, no bird-voiced Patti, was more sought after nor received with greater honours. His name became a proverb in the mouths of people who never heard him. "Tha Byaw Hé," a Mergui man will say when he makes a marvellous haul of fish or gets a super-excellent cheroot. A journey of his to Rangoon produced a popular saw, corresponding to the English "kill-

ing two birds with one stone." Maung Tha Byaw said he 536 was going to worship at the Shwe Dagôn pagoda. He gave a performance or two, and made several (Burmese) fortunes. 538 Hence the saying—

Payā lè pu yin
Leip u lè tu yin.

You go and worship and dig turtles' eggs.

Turtles' eggs for prayer
Reward the pious player.

Maung Tha Byaw was not only a good singer, but himself 522 wrote very good songs, and was particularly clever at coining in phrases the wisdom of many with the wit of one. No other "prince" has ever attained to his fame. Best known among the clowns was Shwe Lôt Gyi, who had the knack of making local jokes wherever he happened to be, and took the fullest advantage of the scope which the language afforded him in the way of punning. Just after the railway from Rangoon to Prome was opened, Shwe Lôt Gyi was performing in a piece where the prince and his servant, the clown, wander away into the forest and fall into a state of great destitution. [533] The prince bewails his sad fate in a dolorous tedat (a tune appropriate to such lamentations), and finishes by asking what they are to do. The lubyet replied, "The English have just opened a railway here. You go and trespass on it, and I'll lay information against you and get the reward." The idea showed considerable acuteness in a man who had never seen a railway before.

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Among the "princesses" many youths have been noted for the sweetness of their voice. The two best were Maung Tha Zan and, running him very close, Maung Mu, both of them, like Tha Byaw and the clown, Mandalay men. The accuracy with which they imitated the female voice was wonderful, the more so as every song abounds with trills and turns which would expose the least roughness. Neither in the recitative, the tremulous erotics, nor the doleful wailings of the maiden for her absent lover, would the stranger ever suspect the performer's sex.

536 The plays are performed during the day only in a few and exceptional cases, such as the arrival of a great man,

535 of the ordinary domestic youth on festive occasions, when he prances about like an extremely self-conscious turkey-cock in the style that suits his capabilities best.

There are a great variety of names for special dances, but in all there is the same waving of hands and weaving of paces. The hands, fingers, elbows, and shoulders are twisted about as if they were circular-jointed; the legs are doubled up and extended in the same fantastic and tentacular fashion, while the body seems to wind and bend in any direction with equal facility. Europeans as a rule find nothing to admire in the dancing except the marvellous sensitiveness to time, and the extreme tension in which every muscle of the body is constantly kept. The solemnity of face is paralleled by the expression of the waltzer who is convinced that he is becoming giddy.

535 Little though the dancing of the men resembles European
562 saltation, that of the girls is still farther from active motion and definitive figures. This is no doubt in great part due to the Burmese female dress. The tamein is simply a square cloth folded round the body and tucked in so that the opening is down the front. This necessitates some adroitness even in walking, and renders all active motions incompatible with modesty. When they dance the skirt is sewn or pinned down the front, so that the girl is, as it were, in a narrow bag, reaching down to her feet and trailing about on the ground in an eighteen-inch or two-foot train. Even thus hampered their dances are much more animated than those of the Indian nautch girls, but still do not go greatly beyond posturing. Nevertheless, the natural and graceful attitudes into which they throw the body, and the cleverness with which they manœuvre their hands and arms, so different from European awkwardness with these members, is not without a charm. It is quite a common thing to see a girl bend over backwards till her lips touch the mat upon which she stands, and pick up from the ground rupees thrown there by the spectators. In Mandalay I have seen a performer double up all her members, head and all, into a space represented by the length of her trunk, and compact enough to be put into an ordinary-sized portmanteau.

The zatthamā, the professional actresses, usually dance

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

to their own singing and often improvise with wonderful cleverness, when performing before a celebrity, or any one whom it is especially desired to honour. Many of them acquire a reputation that extends all over the country, and are often sought for in vain by the wealthiest play-goers. Chief among them was the Yindaw Ma Le, the "Mandalay Diva," who was known to every English official or man of importance who visited Mandalay during the twenty years before the annexation. Unlike most Eastern women, she kept remarkably well, and though her voice failed latterly, she made up as well as she did nearly twenty years before, when she sang in Amarapoora, the City of the Immortals. There were few Englishmen who saw her perform before Lord Mayo in Rangoon—she was sent down specially from Mandalay by King Mindôn for that purpose—who could have believed that she was then close on forty. The want of a national court no doubt prevents any other dancer from taking the place which she has left for ever. 535 562

An accomplishment greatly affected by the coryphées is the extraordinary faculty of moving local muscles, the remainder of the body being perfectly quiet. Many of the men, especially the clowns of the piece, can do the same thing, but it is usually brought in by them only as a mockery of the lady. She will extend the arms alternately and cause the muscles to rise and fall and twitch so vigorously that it may be seen yards off. Similarly the bosom heaves as if violently agitated by passion or exertion, while the face remains perfectly impassive.

These displays are all, however, comparatively uninteresting to foreigners. The posturing and waving of hands, however graceful and supple, become tiresome, and the more so the oftener they are seen. But it is different with the yein pwè, the choral dances, which are very often executed by amateurs, and imply considerable skill and long practice under competent instructors. The *coup d'œil* is very attractive, and the effect of the different groupings quite as good as anything to be seen in the incidental ballet of the European stage, while the brilliance of the dresses and the ebbing and flowing chorus of the dancers add to the picturesqueness of the whole. The yein flourishes most in small villages, where 535

535 the most promising of the youth of both sexes are taken in
charge by a skilled sayā, who trains them assiduously
535 together until they have attained perfection. Even in these
● 562 dances the sexes do not mingle. There are meimma yein
and yaukya yein, the former usually eschewing complex movements, and sitting in rows on the ground, richly decked with bracelets, and dalizan necklaces falling over their silken vests or tight-fitting lace bodices. The dancing consists of the usual pirouetting, or perhaps it ought to be called winding, on both feet, with much serpentine movements of the arms and the head. The loosening of the elbow-joint is greatly practised by Burmese girls with a view to these performances, and also under the impression that it is elegant in itself. From early years the arm is so manipulated that the forearm can be bent back so as to form a curve outwards, and this accomplishment is steadily exhibited on all occasions in public by a belle who has acquired it. Very often the meimma yein is performed by a body of girls, who succeed one another in successive groups. All are seated at first. The chorus is led by a woman, who herself does not dance, and is usually the instructress of the troupe. She begins in a low recitative gradually swelling until at last the first group rise and go through a stately performance. They are succeeded by the next row, who are more lively in their movements, and so on to the last, who are usually young girls, and are much more rapid and varied in their figures than their elder predecessors. Finally, all join in some complicated evolutions, and finish up seated in some pre-arranged figure. But as a rule the meimma yeins, though pretty enough as a mere spectacle, have not sufficient action to redeem them from the accusation of tiresome sameness brought against individual dancing, and they are always so discreet that they might be performed by Sunday-school teachers.

535 In the men's dances it is different. At the commence-
562 ment all are seated, four or five in the front row, and forming
533 a column of perhaps ten or more rows. The conductor gives the sign and all bow down with closed hands raised to the forehead in salutation to the great man in whose honour the dance is given. Then they begin singing in

chorus in the usual way. The song treats in a rambling way of the past history of the village, its ancient glories and heroes; its victories in boat-races, boxing matches, or mains of cocks. Interpolated are catch phrases for the guidance of the dancers. At a certain word all spring to their feet; they sway to the right, to the left; white handkerchiefs are drawn from the belt and waved to the measure of the refrain, peeled white wands replace them; they pirouette simultaneously, they troop round in procession in movements resembling figures in the Lancers or the Haymakers, the time varying with the measure of the song, dying away in plaintive sounds almost to quiescence, and then suddenly rising to excited movement of every limb as the words tell of a let-pwè, in which some local hero of the fancy did glorious deeds, or a fight long years ago when the village spearmen carried the day. Then the measure changes again, the alterations in time being always heralded by some such refrain as to yein daw tha, le maung yo wa, a kind of warning hung out after the manner of the first word of a military command. 535 562 ● 533

Occasionally, a yein troupe which has acquired particular skill and renown travels about the country on special invitation. Rangoon is often supplied with its "country dances" in this way, the townspeople not having the time, or being too numerous to form a good company for themselves. But they very rarely become regular professionals in the same way as the play actors do; they never perform ostensibly to gain a living, and the dances always occur on some fête day, whether in their own place or in the village to which they have been invited. Their instructor always receives a sum of money to recompense him for his trouble and to pay for the expenses of his troupe. Yein pwès are performed ordinarily in private houses or on a public platform, when it is a religious or special festival. A yein is a favourite way of greeting a great man, or an English official on his arrival in a village. It is not so expensive as a zat pwè, is more quickly arranged, allows the sons and daughters of the chief people to distinguish themselves, and lasts just as long as the person it is intended to honour pleases. 535 [463]

526 any more than dancing the Highland Fling can, for judgment as to superiority in either case must be a mere matter of personal opinion, and cannot be governed by hard and fast rules.

These are practically the only outdoor national games. Boxing is a very common institution, but there is no ordinary practice in the evenings, and when a let-pwè comes off it is a regular ceremony more resembling what would be called in Europe a match, or a tournament, than a game. A good deal of agility and skill is shown, leaps into the air, and kicks with the bare feet, and violent upward knocks with the knee finding a place which would not be allowed by the "fancy." The first drawing of blood decides a contest, however slight the injury may be. But boxing is not common now. Among the Karens near Maulmein it is still regularly
[577] kept up, and no young man would be successful in his courting unless he had taken part on some occasion or other at a let-pwè. In Rangoon nowadays contests are of regular occurrence at feast times, but the displays are in sheds and entry money is charged. Elsewhere they are not often seen,
● [562] and the rule that no women shall be present is always rigorously kept.

524 What may be called indoor games are numerous and various. There is a game very much like the English one known as Fox and Geese. There are three big tigers, and eleven or sometimes twelve little ones. It is called legwet kya, and the object is for the big tigers to hunt down on a draught board and eat the little ones. If, however, the cubs can corner the big ones, and prevent them from taking a leap, the latter have to succumb—starve to death in fact. Another game called pasit, or chwe pyitthi, or ansa pyitthi is a steeplechase kind of arrangement, and is a favourite with children and simple country people. It is played on a board shaped and divided like that in the figure.

Cowries are used instead of dice, and the object is to complete the tour of the board as fast as possible, and to take as many opponents as you can on the way. Thus if there were two playing, the first thrower would enter at *a*, and having reached *b*, would continue from *a* to *c*, from *c* to *d*, and so on. The second would commence at *a* also, but are stuck into him, red pepper is forced into his eyes, and the louder he shrieks and groans the better pleased are his friends and relations, for it is the witch, or the natso, that is suffering, and not the sick man at all. If this treatment does not kill or cure him, a final effort is made. A middle-aged woman, sometimes a member of the family, dresses herself up in a fantastic way, and assumes the name of "wife of the evil spirit." A shed is erected for the occasion just outside the house. Music is brought, and the woman begins to dance, slowly at first, and then gradually more and more furiously, until at length she works herself into a regular frenzy or ecstasy. Then it is supposed that the demon has passed out of the sick man into her, and that whatever answers she now gives to questions are the utterances of the demon. Consequently, whatever she directs is implicitly carried out. The instructions usually resolve themselves into offerings to be placed outside for the evil spirit at nightfall. If this fails, then the witch doctors and medicine doctors unite in declaring that the nat is too strong for them, and abandon their patient. Occasionally, if he is of a very strong constitution, he revives after that. Such performances are limited to remote jungle places nowadays. Thus, however, the provinces of the physician and the necromancer run into one another, and it is difficult to say where science ends and magic begins. 757 [562]

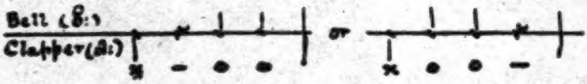
Shampooing is almost always employed in every disease, in addition to the prescriptions of the doctor; and here, at any rate, we have real skill. The shampooers are almost always women, though most men know a little about it too. A professional has a most wonderful knowledge of all the tendons and muscles in the human body, and follows them up with a light pressure of the fingers that affords a relief in the case of rheumatism and stiffness from exhaustion, which is simply incredible to all but those who have experienced it.

In addition to their other work, the hmaw sayās are very much resorted to for love philtres and potions by both sexes. They have always an answer pat if the prescription fails: it is due to the opposition of the eingsaung nat, the guardian spirit of the house; or the applicant has made a mistake as to the date of birth of the object of his affection 789 931

651 525 446 lists were filled up, no matter whether it was an ubone, or a more sacred feast, and, as a consequence, the minds of the people were kept in a state of perpetual unhealthy excitement.

651 525 178 ●[562] Neither buyers nor sellers were to be seen in the bazaar. Cultivators sold off their farming stock and implements, and launched all their money into the state lotteries. Fathers sold their daughters, and husbands their wives, to have a final try for fortune, until the lottery managers issued a notice that they would give no more tickets in exchange for women. To fill up the totals faster, and draw in every available coin, twenty, or even more, people were allowed to club together to buy a single ticket. Business was entirely suspended, and all the people hovered about the lottery-offices, longing for the drawing, while cleaned-out speculators prowled about day and night, watching for an opportunity to thieve and rob. How it was that the plundered people did not rise against the government, or at least against the lottery managers, is a mystery, but they did not. The suburbs of Mandalay were filled for a time with ruined gamblers, until the soldiery were employed to drive them farther afield, when many made their way to the frontier, and recouped themselves by raids on British Burma villages. Eventually money failed, or the people were disillusionised, and the lottery-offices, though several remained open, drove but a very slight trade. 651 655 Then Thibaw Min had to resort to other measures to meet his expenditure, and from July 1881 began disposing of monopolies right and left. Having finished the export monopolies, he commenced with those on imports. The British trade with Upper Burma was being steadily ruined, and the war which ended in the extinction of the kingdom of Burma was made inevitable.

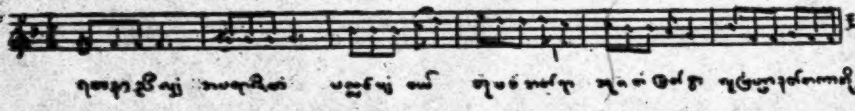
533 Thus : Ex: 18



No great importance is attached to the variation. In one and the same piece of music the quadruple may sometimes change into the duple, or become faster or slower in accordance with the needs of the particular piece of music. But never must a musican get out of rhythmic time[1].

533 So far as I am aware compound time does not seem to be
788 used at all in music, though I detect signs of it in the congregational
●562 chanting of certain quasi-religious verses which used to be the rage
[178] among young Burmese ladies when Myawadi Phongyi was at the height of his singular career about 18 years ago.

Ex 8



I give in example 8 what I can remember of the verses I used to chant as the only boy among a sort of choir of young ladies. This particular verse pays homage to Buddha. But young ladies used to pay homage to his reverence too, kneeling down and singing his praise and wishing him long-life etc. Had I not been a sort of pitch-pipe I would have been as little tolerated in that beauty chorus as a bee in a bouquet.

533 Example 11 (ဘောလယ် *Baw-lè*) illustrates how the vocal part weaves in and out of (အဝင်အထွက်) the instrumental part. Having no regular system of harmony or counterpoint the instrumental accompaniment to Burmese songs means something entirely different from what it means in the west. The instrument accompanies the voice with variations of the same tune liberally embellished. After each section the instrument plays a bar of interlude (အဆော) either to emphasise the close by repetition, or to link it with the next section. In Example 11, so far as the voice is concerned, the section ends with its last note (the tonic in bar 9). But the instrument postpones this final tonic for yet another bar playing the interlude which too ends on that tonic.

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[1] He is not *dead* in time like players of dance music. He keeps in time because he *feels* in time. One thinks of *Tempo Rubato*, but for its implication of virtuosity.

591 matter. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of
orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home
101 village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most
opportune to settle in the husband's community, the chances are that the wife
will maintain contact with her family of orientation by visits from time to
time. People from Tadagale seldom marry individuals from villages that are
582 very distant. The structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension
militate against inequality and male domination in the family.

Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in
•562 contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the
sexes seems to be the historic resultant of two patterns of thought. One is
the apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal
inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal
division of property in the event of divorce, a prominent female role in social
and economic life, and the absence of transmission of surnames. The other
thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese
concepts: whatever ideas of male superiority exist stem from Buddhist ideas of
reincarnation, it being assumed that only a man can attain reincarnation.

In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine
593 tasks as preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly
and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of
the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of a deferential attitude
towards males, are expected of a wife. She is careful that her lower garments
do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching
her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin
the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These
injunctions are followed as a matter of course by village wives and will be
broken deliberately only as an act of malice by a woman who wishes to harm
or lower her husband for some reason.

Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations,
837 there is a tendency towards a double standard of sexual conduct. A husband
who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs
is very likely to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage.
The wife of a philandering husband, on the other hand, will usually do no
more than display hurt feelings for a brief period; rarely will she separate
from her husband, especially if they have children.

593 Siblings. It is the duty of the younger to show deference to the elder.
This pertains to the order of serving food, fetching and carrying things, and
even the arrangement of sleeping mats — a younger sibling should never sleep
with his feet extended towards an elder sibling. Upon the death of a parent,
the eldest child of the same sex assumes that parent's socio-economic role in
the family.

Father and Daughter. Consistent with the age principle, it is a
daughter's duty to be obedient and to wait upon her father. Once an unmarried
daughter passes the age of puberty, her father is expected to lead a circumspect
and moral life more than ever before. Any deviant sexual behavior or drunken-
[581] ness on his part reflects upon his daughter and detracts from her marital chances.

Mother and Son. Although a son owes obedience to his mother, her claim
upon him in this regard is tempered by the fact that, in Burmese Buddhist

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the little thing in her arms, and as she looked upon it her eyes were full of tears. For it was very sick; its little limbs were but thin bones, with big knees and elbows, and its face was very wan. It could not even take any interest in the wonderful sights around, but hardly opened its careworn eyes now and then to blink upon the world.

'Let him recover, let him be well once more!' the woman cried, again and again.

Whom was she beseeching? I do not know.

'Thakin, there will be Someone, Someone. A Spirit may hear. Who can tell? Surely someone will help me? Men would help me if they could, but they cannot; surely there will be someone?'

So she did not remember the story of Ma Pa Da.

Women often pray, I think—they pray that their husbands and those they love may be well. It is a frequent ending to a girl's letter to her lover: 'And I pray always that you may be well.' I never heard of their praying for anything but this: that they may be loved, and those they love may be well. Nothing else is worth praying for besides this. The queen would pray at the pagoda in the palace morning and evening. 'What did she pray for?' 'What should she pray for, thakin? Surely she prayed that her husband might be true to her, and that her children might live and be strong. That is what women pray for. Do you think a queen would pray differently to any other woman?'

'Women,' say the Buddhist monks, 'never understand. They *will* not understand; they cannot learn. And so we say that most women must be

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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born again, as men, before they can see the light and understand the laws of righteousness.' 782 562

What do women care for laws of righteousness? What do they care for justice? What for the everlasting sequences that govern the world? Would not they involve all other men, all earth and heaven, in bottomless chaos, to save one heart they loved? That is woman's religion.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XIV

WOMEN—I

582

> 'Her cheek is more beautiful than the dawn, her eyes are deeper than the river pools; when she loosens her hair upon her shoulders, it is as night coming over the hills.'—*Burmese Love-Song.*

IF you were to ask a Burman, 'What is the position of women in Burma?' he would reply that he did not know what you meant. Women have no position, no fixed relation towards men beyond that fixed by the fact that women are women and men are men. They differ a great deal in many ways, so a Burman would say; men are better in some things, women are better in others; if they have a position, their relative superiority in certain things determines it. How else should it be determined?

If you say by religion, he laughs, and asks what religion has to do with such things? Religion is a culture of the soul; it is not concerned with the relationship of men and women. If you say by law, he says that law has no more to do with it than religion. In the eye of the law both are alike. 'You wouldn't have one law for a man and another for a woman?' he asks.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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In the life of the Buddha nothing is said upon the subject. The great teacher never committed himself to an opinion as to whether men or women were the highest. He had men disciples, he had women disciples; he honoured both. Nowhere in any of his sayings can anything be found to show that he made any difference between them. That monks should be careful and avoid intercourse with women is merely the counterpart of the order that nuns should be careful in their intercourse with men. That man's greatest attraction is woman does not infer wickedness in woman; that woman's greatest attraction is man does not show that man is a devil. Wickedness is a thing of your own heart. If he could be sure that his desire towards women was dead, a monk might see them as much as he liked. The desire is the enemy, not the woman; therefore a woman is not damned because by her man is often tempted to evil; therefore a woman is not praised because by her a man may be led to better thoughts. She is but the outer and unconscious influence.

If, for instance, you cannot see a precipice without wishing to throw yourself down, you blame not the precipice, but your giddiness; and if you are wise you avoid precipices in future. You do not rail against steep places because you have a bad circulation. So it is with women: you should not contemn women because they rouse a devil in man.

And it is the same with man. Men and women are alike subject to the eternal laws. And they are alike subject to the laws of man; in no material

points, hardly even in minor points, does the law 562
discriminate against women. 779

The law as regards marriage and inheritance 562
and divorce will come each in its own place. It 671
is very much the same both for the man and the
woman. 586

The criminal law was the same for both; I have 681
tried to find any difference, and this is all I have found: A woman's life was less valuable than a man's. The price of the body, as it is called, of a woman was less than that of a man. If a woman were accidentally killed, less compensation had to be paid than for a man. I asked a Burman about this once.

'Why is this difference?' I said. 'Why does the law discriminate?'

'It isn't the law,' he said, 'it is a fact. A woman is worth less than a man *in that way*. A maidservant can be hired for less than a manservant, a daughter can claim less than a son. They cannot do so much work; they are not so strong. If they had been worth more, the law would have been the other way; of course they are worth less.'

And so this sole discrimination is a fact, not 562
dogma. It is a fact, no doubt, everywhere. No one 671
would deny it. The pecuniary value of a woman is 428
less than that of a man. As to the soul's value, that is not a question of law, which confines itself to material affairs. But I suppose all laws have been framed out of the necessities of mankind. It was the incessant fighting during the times when our laws grew slowly into shape, the necessity of not allowing the possession of land, and the armed

16: Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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562 wealth that land gave, to fall into the weaker hands
671 of women, that led to our laws of inheritance.

428 Laws then were governed by the necessity of war, of subjecting everything else to the ability to fight. Consequently, as women were not such good fighters as men, they went to the wall. But feudalism never obtained at all in Burma. What fighting they did was far less severe than that of our ancestors, was not the dominant factor in the position, and consequently woman did not suffer.

She has thus been given the inestimable boon of freedom. Freedom from sacerdotal dogma, from secular law, she has always had.

And so, in order to preserve the life of the people, it has never been necessary to pass laws treating woman unfairly as regards inheritance; and as religion has left her free to find her own position, so has the law of the land.

562 And yet the Burman man has a confirmed opinion that he is better than a woman, that men are on the whole superior as a sex to women. 'We may be inferior in some ways,' he will tell you. 'A woman may steal a march on us here and there, but in the long-run the man will always win. Women have no patience.'

I have heard this said over and over again, even by women, that they have less patience than a man. We have often supposed differently. Some Burmans have even supposed that a woman must be reincarnated as a man to gain a step in holiness. I do not mean that they think men are always better than women, but that the best men are far better than the best women, and there are many more of them.

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However all this may be, it is only an opinion. Neither in their law, nor in their religion, nor—what is far more important—in their daily life, do they acknowledge any inferiority in women beyond those patent weaknesses of body that are, perhaps, more differences than inferiorities.

She has always had fair-play, from religion, from law, and from her fellow man and woman.

She has been bound by no ties, she has had perfect freedom to make for herself just such a life as she thinks best fitted for her. She has had no frozen ideals of a long dead past held up to her as eternal copies. She has been allowed to change as her world changed, and she has lived in a very real world—a world of stern facts, not fancies. You see, she has had to fight her own way; for the same laws that made woman lower than man in Europe compensated her to a certain extent by protection and guidance. In Burma she has been neither confined nor guided. In Europe and India for very long the idea was to make woman a hot-house plant, to see that no rough winds struck her, that no injuries overtook her. In Burma she has had to look out for herself: she has had freedom to come to grief as well as to come to strength. All such laws cut both ways. Freedom to do ill must accompany freedom to do well. You cannot have one without the other. The Burmese woman has had both. Ideals act for good as well as for evil; if they cramp all progress, they nevertheless tend to the sustentation of a certain level of thought. She has had none. Whatever she is, she has made herself, finding under the varying circumstances of life what is the best for

562 her; and as her surroundings change, so will she.
What she was a thousand years ago I do not care,
what she may be a thousand years hence I do not
know; it is of what she is to-day that I have tried
to know and write.

858 Children in Burma have, I think, a very good
562 time when they are young. Parentage in Burma
871 has never degenerated into a sort of slavery. It
has never been supposed that gaiety and goodness
are opposed. And so they grow up little merry
naked things, sprawling in the dust of the gardens,
sleeping in the sun with their arms round the village
[894] dogs, very sedate, very humorous, very rarely crying.
Boys and girls when they are babies grow up
together, but with the schooldays comes a division.
All the boys go to school at the monastery without
the walls, and there learn in noisy fashion their
arithmetic, letters, and other useful knowledge. But
little girls have nowhere to go. They cannot go to
the monasteries, these are for boys alone, and the
nunneries are very scarce. For twenty monasteries
there is not one nunnery. Women do not seem to
care to learn to become nuns as men do to become
monks. Why this is so I cannot tell, but there is no
doubt of the fact. And so there are no schools for
girls as there are for boys, and consequently the girls
[369] are not well educated as a rule. In great towns
there are, of course, regular schools for girls, generally
for girls and boys together; but in the villages
562 these very seldom exist. The girls may learn from
212 their mothers how to read and write, but most of
871 them cannot do so. It is an exception in country
places to find a girl who can read, as it is to find

a boy who cannot. If there were more nunneries, 512
there would be more education among the women ; 212
here is cause and effect. But there are not, so the 871
little girls work instead. While their brothers are in 562
the monasteries, the girls are learning to weave and 868
herd cattle, drawing water, and collecting firewood. They begin very young at this work, but it is very light ; they are never overworked, and so it does them no harm usually, but good.

The daughters of better-class people, such as 562
merchants, and clerks, and advocates, do not, of 565
course, work at field labour. They usually learn to 871
read and write at home, and they weave, and many [521]
will draw water. For to draw water is to go to the well, and the well is the great meeting-place of the village. As they fill their jars they lean over the curb and talk, and it is here that is told the latest news, the latest flirtation, the little scandal of the place. Very few men or boys come for water ; carrying is not their duty, and there is a proper place for flirtation. So the girls have the well almost to themselves.

Almost every girl can weave. In many houses 562
there are looms where the girls weave their dresses 286
and those of their parents ; and many girls have 463
stalls in the bazaar. Of this I will speak later. Other duties are the husking of rice and the making of cheroots. Of course, in richer households there will be servants to do all this ; but even in them the daughter will frequently weave either for herself or her parents. Almost every girl will do something, if only to pass the time.

They have no accomplishments. They do not

562 sing, nor play, nor paint. It must never be forgotten
517 that their civilization is relatively a thousand years
behind ours. Accomplishments are part of the polish that a civilization gives, and this they have not yet reached. Accomplishments are also the means to fill up time otherwise unoccupied; but very few Burmese girls have any time on their hands. There is no leisured class, and there are very few girls who have not to help, in one way or another, at the upkeep of the household.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling tells of a young lady who played the banjo. He has been more fortunate than myself, for I have never heard of such a person.
562 They have no accomplishments at all. House-
356 keeping they have not very much of. Houses are
small, and households also are small; and there is very little furniture; and as the cooking is all the same, there is not much to learn in that way. I fear, too, that their houses could not compete as models of neatness with any other nation. Tidiness is one of the last gifts of civilization. We now pride ourselves on our order; we forget how very recent an accomplishment it is. To them it will come with the other gifts of age, for it must never be forgotten that they are a very young people—only children, big children—learning very slowly the lessons of experience and knowledge.

792 When they are between eight and fourteen years
561 of age the boys become monks for a time, as every
792 boy must, and they have a great festival at their
[562] entrance into the monastery. Girls do not enter
304 nunneries, but they, too, have a great feast in their
561 honour. They have their ears bored. It is a
562

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

304 561 562 festival for a girl of great importance, this ear-boring, and, according to the wealth of the parents, it is accompanied by pwès and other rejoicings.

A little girl, the daughter of a shopkeeper here in this town, had her ears bored the other day, and there were great rejoicings. There was a pwè open to all for three nights, and there were great quantities of food, and sweets, and many presents given away, and on the last night the river was illuminated. There was a boat anchored in mid-stream, and from this were launched myriads of tiny rafts, each with a little lamp on board. The lamps gleamed bright with golden light as they drifted on the bosom of the great water, a moving line of living fire. There were little boats, too, with the outlines marked with lamps, and there were pagodas and miniature houses all floating, floating down the river, till, in far distance by the promontory, the lamps flickered out one by one, and the river fell asleep again.

'There is only one great festival in a girl's life,' a woman told me. 'We try to make it as good as we can. Boys have many festivals, girls have but one. It is only just that it should be good.'

562 157 And so they grow up very quiet, very sedate, looking on the world about them with very clear eyes. It is strange, talking to Burmese girls, to see how much they know and understand of the world about them. It is to them no great mystery, full of unimaginable good and evil, but a world that they are learning to understand, and where good and evil are never unmixed. Men are to them neither angels nor devils, but just men, and so the world does not hold for them the disappointments, the disillusionings

522 that await those who do not know. They have their
157 dreams—who shall doubt it?—dreams of him who shall love them, whom they shall love, who shall make life one great glory to them; but their dreams are dreams that can come true. They do not frame to themselves ideals out of their own ignorance and imagine these to be good, but they keep their eyes wide open to the far more beautiful realities that are around them every day. They know that a living lover is greater, and truer, and better than any ideal of a girl's dream. They live in a real world, and they know it is good.

584 In time the lover comes. There is a delightful custom all through Burma, an institution, in fact, called 'courting-time.' It is from nine till ten o'clock, more especially on moonlight nights, those wonderful tropic nights, when the whole world lies in a silver dream, when the little wandering airs that touch your cheek like a caress are heavy with the scent of flowers, and your heart comes into your throat for the very beauty of life.

There is in front of every house a veranda, raised perhaps three feet from the ground, and there the girl will sit in the shadow of the eaves, sometimes with a friend, but usually alone; and her suitors will come and stand by the veranda, and talk softly in little broken sentences, as lovers do. There may be many young men come, one by one, if they mean business, with a friend if it be merely a visit of
584 courtesy. And the girl will receive them all, and
431 will talk to them all; will laugh with a little humorous knowledge of each man's peculiarities; and she may give them cheroots, of her own making;

marriage, which is with most people a ceremony 585
performed in full daylight with all accessories of
display, is with the Burmese generally a secret.
Two or three friends, perhaps, will be called quietly
to the house, and the man and the woman will eat
together, and thus become husband and wife. Then
they will separate again, and not for several days, or
even weeks perhaps, will it be known that they are
married; for it is seldom that they can set up house
for themselves just at once. Often they will marry 591
and live apart for a time with their parents. Sometimes
they will go and live together with the man's
parents, but more usually with the girl's mother.
Then after a time, when they have by their exertions
made a little money, they build a house and
go to live there; but sometimes they will live on
with the girl's parents for years.

A girl does not change her name when she 582
marries, nor does she wear any sign of marriage, 593
such as a ring. Her name is always the same, and
there is nothing to a stranger to denote whether she
be married or not, or whose wife she is; and she
keeps her property as her own. Marriage does not
confer upon the husband any power over his wife's
property, either what she brings with her, what she
earns, or what she inherits subsequently; it all
remains her own, as does his remain his own. But 593
usually property acquired after marriage is held 562
jointly. You will inquire, for instance, who is the 421
owner of this garden, and be told Maung Han, Ma
Shwè, the former being the husband's name and the
latter the wife's. Both names are used very frequently
in business and in legal proceedings, and indeed it is

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usual for both husband and wife to sign all deeds they may have occasion to execute. Nothing more free than a woman's position in the marriage state can be imagined. By law she is absolutely the mistress of her own property and her own self; and if it usually happens that the husband is the head of the house, that is because his nature gives him that position, not any law.

With us marriage means to a girl an utter breaking of her old ties, the beginning of a new life, of new duties, of new responsibilities. She goes out into a new and unknown world, full of strange facts, leaving one dependence for another, the shelter of a father for the shelter of a husband. She has even lost her own name, and becomes known but as the mistress of her husband; her soul is merged in his. But in Burma it is not so at all. She is still herself, still mistress of herself, an equal partner for life.

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I have said that the Burmese have no ideals, and this is true; but in the Laws of Manu there are laid down some of the requisite qualities for a perfect wife. There are seven kinds of wife, say the Laws of Manu: a wife like a thief, like an enemy, like a master, like a friend, like a sister, like a mother, like a slave. The last four of these are good, but the last is the best, and these are some of her qualities:

'She should fan and soothe her master to sleep, and sit by him near the bed on which he lies. She will fear and watch lest anything should disturb him. Every noise will be a terror to her; the hum of a mosquito as the blast of a trumpet; the fall of a leaf without will sound as loud as thunder. Even she

will guard her breath as it passes her lips to and 593
fro, lest she awaken him whom she fears. 885
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'And she will remember that when he awakens he will have certain wants. She will be anxious that the bath be to his custom, that his clothes are as he wishes, that his food is tasteful to him. Always she will have before her the fear of his anger.'

It must be remembered that the Laws of Manu [171]
are of Indian origin, and are not totally accepted by 593
the Burmese. I fear a Burmese girl would laugh at 885
this ideal of a wife. She would say that if a wife 562
were always afraid of her husband's wrath, she and he, too, must be poor things. A household is ruled by love and reverence, not by fear. A girl has no idea when she marries that she is going to be her husband's slave, but a free woman, yielding to him in those things in which he has most strength, and taking her own way in those things that pertain to a woman. She has a very keen idea of what things she can do best, and what things she should leave to her husband. Long experience has taught her that there are many things she should not interfere with; and she knows it is experience that has proved it, and not any command. She knows that the reason women are not supposed to interfere in public affairs is because their minds and bodies are not fitted for them. Therefore she accepts this, in the same way as she accepts physical inferiority, as a fact against which it is useless and silly to declaim, knowing that it is not men who keep her out, but her own unfitness. Moreover, she knows that it is made good to her in other ways, and thus the balance is redressed. You see, she knows her own strength and her own weak-

573 ness. Can there be a more valuable knowledge for
885 anyone than this?

562 In many ways she will act for her husband with
562 vigour and address, and she is not afraid of appear-
593 ing in his name or her own in law courts, for instance,
432 or in transacting certain kinds of business. She
621 knows that she can do certain business as well as or better than her husband, and she does it. There is nothing more remarkable than the way in which she makes a division of these matters in which she can act for herself, and those in which, if she act at all, it is for her husband.

Thus, as I have said, she will, as regards her own property or her own business, act freely in her own name, and will also frequently act for her husband too. They will both sign deeds, borrow money on joint security, lend money repayable to them jointly. But in public affairs she will never allow her name to appear at all. Not that she does not take a keen interest in such things. She lives in no world apart; all that affects her husband interests her as keenly as it does him. She lives in a world of men and women, and her knowledge of public affairs, and her desire and powers of influencing them, is great. But she learnt long ago that her best way is to act through and by her husband, and that his strength and his name are her bucklers in the fight. Thus women are never openly concerned in any political matters. How strong their feeling is can better be illustrated by a story than in any other way.

175 In 1889 I was stationed far away on the north-
726 west frontier of Burma, in charge of some four
668 thousand square miles of territory which had been

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speaks of is news to me, and must have happened while I was away.' 175 622

'Then, who wrote the letter?' I asked.

'Ah!' he said, 'I think I know; but I will go and make sure.'

Then Saw Ka went to find the guard who had come in with the prisoners, and I dissolved court and went out shooting. After dinner, as we sat round a great bonfire before the mess, for the nights were cold, Saw Ka and his brother came to me, and they sat down beside the fire and told me all about it.

It appeared that three days after Saw Ka left his village, some robbers came suddenly one evening to a small hamlet some two miles away and looted from there all the cattle, thirty or forty head, and went off with them. The frightened owners came in to tell the headman about it, and in his absence they told his wife. And she, by virtue of the order of appointment as headman, which was in her hands, ordered the villagers to turn out and follow the dacoits. She issued such government arms as she had in the house, and the villagers went and pursued the dacoits by the cattle tracks, and next day they overtook them, and there was a fight. When the villagers returned with the cattle and the thieves, she had the letter written to me, and the prisoners were sent in, under her husband's brother, with an escort. Everything was done as well, as successfully, as if Saw Ka himself had been present. But if it had not been for the accident of Saw Ka's sudden appearance, I should probably never have known that this exploit was due to his wife; for she was 175 622 562 ●

175 622 acting for her husband, and she would not have been pleased that her name should appear.

562 'A good wife,' I said to Saw Ka.

'Like many,' he answered.

462 But in her own line she has no objection to
publicity. I have said that nearly all women work,
and that is so. Married or unmarried, from the age
of sixteen or seventeen, almost every woman has
some occupation besides her own duties. In the
higher classes she will have property of her own to
manage; in the lower classes she will have some
trade. I cannot find that in Burma there have ever
been certain occupations told off for women in which
they may work, and others tabooed to them. As
there is no caste for the men, so there is none for
the women. They have been free to try their hands
at anything they thought they could excel in, without any fear of public opinion. But nevertheless,
as is inevitable, it has been found that there are
certain trades in which women can compete successfully with men, and certain others in which they
cannot. And these are not quite the same as in the
West. We usually consider sewing to be a feminine
462 occupation. In Burma, there being no elaborately
294 cut and trimmed garments, the amount of sewing
done is small, but that is usually done by men.
Women often own and use small hand-machines,
but the treadles are always used by men only. As
I am writing, my Burmese orderly is sitting in the
garden sewing his jacket. He is usually sewing
when not sent on messages. He seems to sew very
well.

Weaving is usually done by women. Under

443 density of population, the means of communication,
and other matters. But a bazaar within reach there
must always be, for it is only there that most articles
443 can be bought. The bazaar is usually held in a
347 public building erected for the purpose, and this
may vary from a great market built of brick and
iron to a small thatched shed. Sometimes, indeed,
there is no building at all, merely a space of beaten
ground.

443 The great bazaar in Mandalay is one of the sights
369 of the city. The building in which it is held is the
property of the municipality, but is leased out. It
is a series of enormous sheds, with iron roofs and
beaten earth floor. Each trade has a shed or sheds
to itself. There is a place for rice-sellers, for butchers,
for vegetable-sellers, for the vendors of silks, of
cottons, of sugar and spices, of firewood, of jars, of
[563] fish. The butchers are all natives of India. I have
[562] explained elsewhere why this should be. The fire-
wood-sellers will mostly be men, as will also the
large rice-merchants, but nearly all the rest are
women.

You will find the sellers of spices, fruit, vegetables, and other such matters seated in long rows, on mats placed upon the ground. Each will have a square of space allotted, perhaps six feet square, and there she will sit with her merchandise in a basket or baskets before her. For each square they will pay the lessee a halfpenny for the day, which is only three hours or so. The time to go is in the morning from six till eight, for that is the busy time. Later on all the stalls will be closed, but in the early morning the market is thronged. Every house-

443 gauzy silk handkerchiefs; but often these are sold
286 at separate stalls.

But prettier than the silks are the sellers, for
these are nearly all girls and women, sweet and
fresh in their white jackets, with flowers in their hair.
And they are all delighted to talk to you and show
you their goods, even if you do not buy; and they
will take a compliment sedately, as a girl should, and
they will probably charge you an extra rupee for it
when you come to pay for your purchases. So it is
never wise for a man, unless he have a heart of stone,
443 to go marketing for silks. He should always ask a
562 lady friend to go with him and do the bargaining,
and he will lose no courtesy thereby, for these women
know how to be courteous to fellow-women as well
as to fellow-men.

443 In the provincial bazaars it is much the same.
369 There may be a few travelling merchants from
438 Rangoon or Mandalay, most of whom are men;
but nearly all the retailers are women. Indeed,
442 speaking broadly, it may be said that the retail trade
of the country is in the hands of the women, and
they nearly all trade on their own account. Just as
the men farm their own land, the women own their
businesses. They are not saleswomen for others,
but traders on their own account; and with the
exception of the silk and cloth branches of the trade,
it does not interfere with home-life. The bazaar
lasts but three hours, and a woman has ample time
for her home duties when her daily visit to the
bazaar is over; she is never kept away all day in
shops and factories.

Her home-life is always the centre of her life;

462 Her home-life is always the centre of her life

she could not neglect it for any other: it would seem to her a losing of the greater in the less. But the effect of this custom of nearly every woman having a little business of her own has a great influence on her life. It broadens her views, it teaches her things she could not learn in the narrow circle of home duties; it gives her that tolerance and understanding which so forcibly strikes everyone who knows her. It teaches her to know her own strength and weakness, and how to make the best of each. Above all, by showing her the real life about her, and how much beauty there is everywhere, to those whose eyes are not shut by conventions, it saves her from that dreary, weary pessimism that seeks its relief in fancied idealism, in art, in literature, and in religion, and which is the curse of so many of her sisters in other lands.

562 Yet, with all their freedom, Burmese women are very particular in their conduct. Do not imagine that young girls are allowed, or allow themselves, to go about alone except on very frequented roads. I suppose there are certain limits in all countries to the freedom a woman allows herself, that is to say, if she is wise. For she knows that she cannot always trust herself; she knows that she is weak sometimes, and she protects herself accordingly. She is timid, with a delightful timidity that fears, because it half understands; she is brave, with the bravery of a girl who knows that as long as she keeps within certain limits she is safe. Do not suppose that they ever do, or ever can, allow themselves that freedom of action that men have; it is an impossibility. Girls are very carefully looked after

by their mothers, and wives by their husbands; and they delight in observing the limits which experience has indicated to them. There is a funny story which will illustrate what I mean. A great friend of mine, an officer in government service, went home not very long ago and married, and came out again to Burma with his wife. They settled down in a little up-country station. His duties were such as obliged him to go very frequently on tour far away from his home, and he would be absent ten days at a time or more. So when it came for the first time that he was obliged to go out and leave his wife behind him alone in the house, he gave his head-servant very careful directions. This servant was a Burman who had been with him for many years, who knew all his ways, and who was a very good servant. He did not speak English; and my friend gave him strict orders.

'The mistress,' he said, 'has only just come here to Burma, and she does not know the ways of the country, nor what to do. So you must see that no harm comes to her in any way while I am in the jungle.'

Then he gave directions as to what was to be done in any eventuality, and he went out.

He was away for about a fortnight, and when he returned he found all well. The house had not caught fire, nor had thieves stolen anything, nor had there been any difficulty at all. The servant had looked after the other servants well, and my friend was well pleased. But his wife complained.

'It has been very dull,' she said, 'while you were away. No one came to see me; of all the officers

562 here, not one ever called. I saw only two or three ladies, but not a man at all.'

And my friend, surprised, asked his servant how it was.

'Didn't anyone come to call?' he asked.

'Oh yes,' the servant answered; 'many gentlemen came to call—the officers of the regiment and others. But I told them the thakin was out, and that the thakinma could not see anyone. I sent them all away.'

562 576 At the club that evening my friend was questioned as to why in his absence no one was allowed to see his wife. The whole station laughed at him, but I think he and his wife laughed most of all at the careful observances of Burmese etiquette by the servant; for it is the Burmese custom for a wife not to receive in her husband's absence. Anyone who wants to see her must stay outside or in the veranda, and she will come out and speak to him. It would be a grave breach of decorum to receive visitors while her husband is out.

562 So that even a Burmese woman is not free from restrictions — restrictions which are merely rules founded upon experience. No woman, no man, can ever free herself or himself from the bonds that even a young civilization demands. A freedom from all restraint would be a return, not only to savagery, but to the condition of animals—nay, even animals are bound by certain conventions.

000 The higher a civilization, the more conventions are required; and freedom does not mean an absence of rules, but that all rules should be founded on experience and common sense.

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562 There are certain restrictions on a woman's actions which must be observed as long as men are men and women women. That the Burmese woman never recognizes them unless they are necessary, and then accepts the necessity as a necessity, is the fact wherein her freedom lies. If at any time she should recognize that a restriction was unnecessary, she would reject it. If experience told her further restrictions were required, she would accept them without a doubt.

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CHAPTER XVI

WOMEN—III

> ‘For women are very tender-hearted.’
> *Wethandaya.*

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‘YOU know, thakin,’ said a man to me, ‘that we say sometimes that women cannot attain unto the great deliverance, that only men will come there. We think that a woman must be born again as a man before she can enter upon the way that leads to heaven.’

‘Why should that be so?’ I asked. ‘I have looked at the life of the Buddha, I have read the sacred books, and I can find nothing about it. What makes you think that?’

He explained it in this way: ‘Before a soul can attain deliverance it must renounce the world, it must have purified itself by wisdom and meditation from all the lust of the flesh. Only those who have done this can enter into the Great Peace. And many men do this. The country is full of monks, men who have left the world, and are trying to follow in the path of the great teacher. Not all these will immediately attain to heaven, for purifi-

562 775 cation is a very long process; but they have entered into the path, they have seen the light, if it be even a long way off yet. They know whither they would go. But women, see how few become nuns! Only those who have suffered such shipwreck in life that this world holds nothing more for them worth having become nuns. And they are very few. For a hundred monks there is not one nun. Women are too attached to their home, to their fathers, their husbands, their children, to enter into the holy life; and, therefore, how shall they come to heaven except they return as men? Our teacher says nothing about it, but we have eyes, and we can see.'

562 792 All this is true. Women have no desire for the holy life. They cannot tear themselves away from their home-life. If their passions are less than those of men, they have even less command over them than men have. Only the profoundest despair will drive a woman to a renunciation of the world. If on an average their lives are purer than those of men, they cannot rise to the heights to which men can. How many monks there are—how few nuns! Not one to a hundred.

562 782 Yet in some ways women are far more religious than men. If you go to the golden pagoda on the hilltop and count the people kneeling there doing honour to the teacher, you will find they are nearly all women. If you go to the rest-houses by the monastery, where the monks recite the law on Sundays, you will find that the congregations are nearly all women. If you visit the monastery without the gate you will see many visitors bringing little presents, and they will be women.

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'Thakin, many men do not care for religion at all, but when a man does do so, he takes it very seriously. He follows it out to the end. He becomes a monk, and surrenders the whole world. But with women it is different. Many women, nearly all women, will like religion, and none will take it seriously. We mix it up with our home-life, and our affections, and our worldly doings; for we like a little of everything.' So said a woman to me. 562 782

Is this always true? I do not know, but it is very true in Burma. Nearly all the women are religious, they like to go to the monastery and hear the law, they like to give presents to the monks, they like to visit the pagoda and adore Gaudama the Buddha. I am sure that if it were not for their influence the laws against taking life and against intoxicants would not be observed as stringently as they are. So far they will go. As far as they can use the precepts of religion and retain their home-life they will do so; as it was with Yathodaya so long ago, so it is now. But when religion calls them and says, 'Come away from the world, leave all that you love, all that your heart holds good, for it is naught; see the light, and prepare your soul for peace,' they hold back. This they cannot do; it is far beyond them. 'Thakin, we *cannot do so.* It would seem to us terrible,' that is what they say. 562 779

A man who renounces the world is called 'the great glory,' but not so a woman.

I have said that the Buddhist religion holds men and women as equal. If women cannot observe its laws as men do, it is surely their own fault if they be held the less worthy.

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Women themselves admit this. They honour a man greatly who becomes a monk, not so a nun. Nuns have but little consideration. And why? Because what is good for a man is not good for a woman; and if, indeed, renunciation of the world be the only path to the Great Peace, then surely it must be true that women must be born again.

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was the chain that bound them together. Had it 586
not been for that they would have been divorced 177
long ago; for they had never agreed very well, and both sides had bitter grounds for complaint. They would have been divorced, and both could have gone their own way. But now, what was to be done?

That is one of my memories: this is another.

There was a girl I knew, the daughter of a man 428
who had made some money by trading, and when 562
the father died the property was divided according to law between the girl and her brother. She was a little heiress in her way, owning a garden, where grew many fruit-trees, and a piece of rice land. She had also a share in a little shop which she managed, and she had many gold bracelets and fine diamond earrings. She was much wooed by the young men about there, and at last she married. He was a 586
young man, good-looking, a sergeant of police, and 593
for a time they were very happy. And then trouble came. The husband took to bad ways. The knowledge that he could get money for nothing was too much for him. He drank and he wasted her money, and he neglected his work, and at last he was dismissed from government employ. And his wife got angry with him, and complained of him to the neighbours; and made him worse, though she was at heart a good girl. Quickly he went from bad to worse, until in a very short time, six months, I think, he had spent half her little fortune. Then she began to limit supplies—the husband did no work at all—and in consequence he began to neglect her; they had many quarrels, and her tongue was sharp, and matters got worse and worse until they

Divorce is a dissolution of that partnership. A 586
Burman would not ask, 'Were they married?' but, 779
'Are they man and wife?' And so with divorce, it is a cessation of the state of marriage.

Elders tell me that women ask for divorce far 586
more than men do. 'Men have patience, and women 562
have not,' that is what they say. For every little 157
quarrel a woman will want a divorce. 'Thakin, if we were to grant divorces every time a woman came and demanded it, we should be doing nothing else all day long. If a husband comes home to find dinner not cooked, and speaks angrily, his wife will rush to us in tears for a divorce. If he speaks to another woman and smiles, if he does not give his wife a new dress, if he be fond of going out in the evening, all these are reasons for a breathless demand for a divorce. The wives get cross and run to us and cry, "My husband has been angry with me. Never will I live with him again. Give me a divorce." Or, "See my clothes, how old they are. I cannot buy any new dress. I will have a divorce." And we say, "Yes, yes; it is very sad. Of course, you must have a divorce; but we cannot give you one to-night. Go away, and come again in three days or in four days, when we have more time." And they go away, thakin, and they do not return. Next day it is all forgotten. You see, they don't know what they want; they turn with the wind—they have no patience.'

Sometimes they repent too late. Here is another 586
of my memories about divorce: 573

There was a man and his wife, cultivators, living in a small village. The land that he cultivated

352 TAUNG thick. The door had two leaves to it and one mirror. However, this cupboard had fallen into disuse as a receptacle for clothes, the family preferring to keep their clothing in teak boxes. The other cupboard had no mirror and was used to store crockery in. It measured 2 TAUNG wide, three TAUNGS high and little less than one TAUNG thick.

There were also two huge boxes both of which had been received as a bequest from his father. They were very heavy and needed two people to lift each of them. Each measured one TAUNG and five fingers long, one TAUNG broad, and one TAUNG high. Each had four legs two inches high. They were identical and both were used for clothing.

There was also a round table with four legs about two feet tall and with a diameter of two feet. This U Myaing bought in Rangoon for Rs. 3/8.

[291] [562] [651] A special basket was kept for storing women's HTA-MEINS (outer feminine nether garments). The Burmese do not allow mixture of women's and men's clothing. They had one of these baskets with lid in Pathwe. It was bought in Pantanaw and cost them 12 annas.

353 415 The following bric-a-brac is reported:- a porcelain duck and a porcelain rooster which had been handed down for two or three generations and had been used as a receptacle for trinkets and other small articles; a glass elephant also about a hundred years old with drawers to contain trinkets.

[251] The following items are containers which may be regarded as household furnishings: a betel box about a hundred years old with a diameter of about twelve inches; a clay water jug overlaid with porcelain, also a hundred years old; two huge vessels for HSOON, one costing Rs. 25/- and lasting twenty years, and the other costing Rs. 15/- and lasting 13 years.

[796] These vessels were used when the family went to the KYAUNG to observe the sacred days. On such days HSOON for the whole family would be carried in these vessels. A KYAUK KAR food carrier woven of HNEE, (pith of the fibre used for mat weaving and overlaid with KYAUK KAR) cost Rs. 8/- and was used for about thirteen years. Five huge

[251] earthenware jars each $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter and 3 feet high, and three small jars were used to store fish. Each of the large jars cost Rs. 30/- and the small ones cost Rs. 4/8.

it out to dry in the sun throughout the next day, then pound again 251
and store in jars. The total process takes two days."

U Myaing continues his explanation of the IN fishery:- 263

"The fishery is worked on a co-operative basis. We contribute 226
equal sums of money. If one puts up Rs. 100/- all put up Rs.100/-;
if Rs.1000/- all put up Rs.1000/- each. We group together and work. 474
Rights to the site of the fishery must be secured from the government
by auction. We have to make an initial payment of about Rs. 1000/- 463
or Rs. 2000/- and in bidding among ourselves the price increases to eight thousand, nine thousand, ten thousand, twelve thousand. The original price was three thousand rupees. This is the cost of the Deputy Commissioner's auction. There were many bidders at the auction for the IN. Four, five, six. For example if I give a thousand rupees you offer two thousand, he gives three, four, five thousand ...... When it comes to the hand of the successful bidder the price has increased. The money for the fishery rights have to be paid in later (after the fishing has begun). For example if I pay in a thousand rupees this month, I pay a thousand the next month and the next, in several instalments. This is in addition to the amount we sink into the actual working of the business. (Cost of constructing the IN and equipment).

"The fishermen do not get paid a salary. They have shares. Accounts are kept of how much fihh is caught, how much sold, and only after the IN has been worked to the end of the season is everything cleared up. Each fisherman gets only one share, and the profits are equally divided. We have to pay equal amounts of money for the IN and the money we get from the IN is the same for each of us. We all group and work together. There are some INS where one takes the lead and engages all the men and works it for himself. What he gets he keeps for himself. He pays the wages. In selling, we discuss the matter among ourselves and then sell. The four or five elders get together and if they decide to sell this kind of fish for this price, it is sold.

"As one of the elders, I go alone and bid at the auctioning in [656]
the Deputy Commissioner's office. I also supervise the actual fishing
saying to the other fishermen - "Do this, and this and this." I have 226
a list of what things they need and have to go and buy these things
for them. I have to buy poles, I have to buy YIN bamboo, I have to 463
buy all the implements which are to be used. I have to collect
money, and buy all the implements used in the IN. I have to keep 621
accounts for this. I get a bit more money (than the other fishermen) by making goods (from the profits of manufacture). You see, I also make dried Nga-gyi fish and Ngapi-daung. I buy the fish from them and process it. I have not worked at INS all my life. I worked for about ten years at the time when the British king reigned. When the Japanese came I worked at INS no longer."(He then bought fish and sold the preparations.)

U Myaing gives the following supplementary information:

" There are ten leaders or foremen in the village, each of them taking charge of about seven or eight men. In all there are about eighty workers in the three sub-villages of Pathwe working with me at our IN. About thirty or forty of these live in YWA-GYI-BET on our side of the river. These are men working at our IN only. There are also workers living in the village who work in the six other INS of the neighbourhood. About a hundred of the two hundred families in
YWA-GYI-BET work INS. The rest prodess the fish, dry it, make ngapi [438]
etc., and to do this they have to buy the fish from the IN workers. Afterwards they sell to buyers who come from Upper Burma. Or sometimes they go upcountry in boats and steamers to sell the produce. Some people who are not IN workers go to the INS and help to extract fish oil. Fish like Nga-Hpare-Aung yeild about one viss of oil to every 10 viss of fish. The fish are cut open with a knife and the fat collected. The women come and help without payment and take
home oil for themselves when they go back. The women of my household [562]
also used to do this.

The daily work schedule of U Myaing while he was working 512
as a fish processor (2 months in a year) was as follows:- 461

He rose at four or five in the morning said his prayers, drank 264
plain tea, had boiled beans, fried fish and rice left over from the previous day's evening meal. After that he went to collect fish, bring it to the bank and start work on it. He rested from 11 o'clock to 2 o'clock. At two he resumed work till about five when he would be finished for the day, Sometimes he would sleep at the work place after returning home for his evening meal.

Work in the Refugee Camp.

Shortly after arriving at the Camp U Myaing worked in Sulian 722
Park near the Kokine market where a factory for spinning and weaving 461
cloth was being set up. The contractor was Chinese, and he engaged 464
between 30 to 35 labourers every day. These labourers were unskilled 331
and they were employed in levelling the ground and laying the foundation of the factory. Most of the labourers were Indians - there being only two Burmans, U Myaing and Ma Aye Myaing got Rs. 2/-. The working hours stretched from eight in the morning to 12 noon, with a break of one hour at 12. At one o'clock they resumed work and continued until five in the evening. In the mornings they had to go to the factory by themselves, and this took them about a half hour walk. Sometimes they were sent home in a truck in the evenings. U Myaing had to enquire each day at various places for a chance to work. He was not always successful.

It was not usual for Ma Aye Myaing to come along like this to [562]●
work as a labourer. This was the first time she did so. Ma Aye Myaing said that in future she would accompany U Myaing whenever there are prospects of such work. They knew that women worked in this way, but had not known that such work was available.

As a matter of fact, I met U Myaing through the mats which were 285
made in his camp. We got dinner place mats through him. These are 437
rectangular 1½ feet by 2 feet mats of finelywoven split cane in an over 2 - under 2 pattern. They cost Rs. 2/8 each. U Myaing arranged for the making of these mats and collected the money for them, but

285 they were made by friends. Ma Aye Myaing and Daw Aw Zar appear to
437 specialize in the larger mats such as used for sleeping. Mat making
appears to be an occupation which in ordinary times is unimportant but it is relied heavily upon in bad times.

461 The children are put to work around the house and in processing
●562 the fish at an early age. Just recently U Myaing's eldest daughter
561 left school to learn a trade. She left one month ago from the fourth
[277] standard, to learn cheroot rolling. In another month's time she will
874 have learnt how. She does not have to pay any fees - neither is she paid for her help. She lives with her aunt (U Myaing's sister) and
[294] has her meals there. Near their house there is also an embroidery shop which is owned by her aunt. At night U Myaing's daughter is taught embroidery and sewing by her aunt. The owner of the cheroot rolling shop is not a relative, but the women who work there are aunts and grand-aunts of the girl. When she has learnt the trade, then she will be paid between two and three rupees a day on piece work basis.

463 At present (May 1951) U Myaing is working as a sweeper in the
363 Rangoon Municipality on a monthly wage of Rs. 80/-. There is an over-
512 seer placed over him every day. U Myaing's main job is to keep one street in town clean. He leaves his house at six and arrives at the overseer's by half past six and there a roll-call is taken of about a hundred of them. At seven he begins on his street and stops at about half-eight to go to answer the roll-call (see below for rest of schedule). He has personal contact only with the overseer, the doctor and the WUNDAUK (official). All three of them go around the town to see if they work hard enough. The WUNDAUK also comes everyday to witness the roll-call. "If we do not do good work we shall be dismissed. Everything is in their hands. But they do so after two or three warnings. We do not possess any rights at all. Sometimes offenders are sent to other streets that require harder labour."

U Myaing's street is located in Myeni-gon, and he has to clean the street of dirt as well as clean the drains on either side.

His daily schedule at present is as follows: He rises at 4, washes his face and cleans his teeth, says his prayers and then has plain tea which Ma Aye Myaing has prepared for him. At six he leaves

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the husband is too old to work. Aged parents are invariably respected 554
but those who can still support themselves are "worshipped". Parents 454
do not rely on their sons who have their own families to support but feel 888
that their daughters will always "bring them a cup of curry". 461

The third urge is to have wealth to donate to the Buddhist church. 554
This is regarded as a sound investment since it not only brings a most 735
satisfying honour especially in old age (to be a "pagoda giver") but 775
also counts as merit credited to the individual's account in eternity.

Competition is keenly felt between individuals and families of 565
the same occupation group or adjacent groups but not between the lower 477
and upper classes. An exception is where family traditional land has 554
changed hands - and hard feelings may persist. A carpenter's family 461
does not envy and covet the riches of a government official's family.
His lot is due to KARMA and even if he wished to attain such fortune it
would be beyond his abilities. More important, it is not expected of
him. So the carpenter is content with cheap jewelry for his women and
an occasional gold coin - but the pattern is the same as for the upper
class. However among the individuals and families of an occupation
level there is much rivalry for the benefits wealth can bring. It is
a point of pride to have the largest diamonds at a social function,
and to give the biggest pagoda. Wives brag that their husbands "prevent
the hairs of their hands from singeing" - that they have servants to
cook. Rank and recognition are based on these considerations. 461

The women of the family exert powerful influence in financial matters 562 ●
and are respected for their sound judgement. Women's occupations include 463
cigar manufacturing, pottery making, and especially shop keeping.

The beginning of an enterprise is conditioned by the wisdom of 777
the ancients and especially the date and place which are given by 461
formula in the Burmese calendar. There are YET-RAZA (day king of)
"fortunate days" and PYAD-THADA "unlucky days". For example the
calendar announces that Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of a particular
month are fortunate days to begin enterprises, and other days either
unfortunate or neutral. Rangoon sophisticates (but never villagers)
tell such stories as this: Two phongyis travelled by boat; the first
boarded the boat on a fortunate day to begin travelling. The next day
the boat came to the second phongyi's village. This was an unfortunate

Analysis of wearing a parel used by U Myaing's family.

291 511 178 722 Fifty three items of wearing apparel and personal accoutrement were recorded. These are divided into three large catagories:

(1) Objects used in Pathwe but not in camp.
(2) Objects used in camp but not in Pathwe.
(3) Objects used in both localities.

Twenty nine items used in Pathwe were not used in camp. 55% of the Pathwe complex had been discontinued for a variety of reasons. The bulk of the objects were not replaced due to lack of funds. Many items such as umbrellas, towels, leather sandals were needed and desired. Some objects, such as men's jackets, headbands, silk longyis and associated underwear pants, men's bamboo hats, men's hair dressing comb, jewelry and parasols are recognized as luxury items. Both the ceremonial and social occasions in which such luxuries assumed the proportions of necessities had diminished or disappeared so that the desire for them is no longer as strong. This is reflected in the statements that some of the luxuries were no longer desired (hair dressing) or that smaller quantities (silk longyis) would be adequate.

It is interesting to note that whereas both U Myaing and the
ladies had the same number of items in Pathwe (26 respectively) -
in camp U Myaing has only 7 items or 28% of the Pathwe complex.
The ladies, however, have 16 items or 59% of the Pathwe complex.
●[562] This data suggests that the women's standards are less flexible than
the men's. In order to be respectable the women have to have certain
items. Whereas, U Myaing's demand depends more on his immediate
[183] situation. If this is so, then it follows that the men's standard
might expand more rapidly under opulent conditions - with sets of
special socio-ceremonial garb (headband, silk longyi, jacket, jewelry
including western items(Gillette razor, topee, western jackets and
shirts).

[177] Only three objects were used in camp but not in Pathwe. The rubber-tyred wooden sandals are simply new varieties of an old form used in Pathwe - a cheap and popular urban form due to abundance of tyre-rubber following the war. The earrings with white stones and set of silver buttons are also substitute varieties, not innovations.

of clothes. The old people take care to save the torn garments for 291
use in wiping the hands after meals, for handling hot pots on the 554
stove and the like. 181

There are three classes of clothing (1) working clothes (2) 291
festive dress, and (3) religious dress. The working clothes consist 292
of the cheaper and less ornate fabrics and are mainly of cotton.
The men usually bind the longyi around the loins by looping the
shirt in a band between the legs. Htamein (women's longyi)
waist band is secured under the armpits when bathing.
While walking in the rain the
longyis are also raised to prevent them from becoming wet. Festive
dress involves the best which one has, usually silks and are worn
on the Sabbath days and at special social occasions as the SHIN BYÀ
and other ceremonies. Religious dress is worn constantly by Pongyis 291
(orange robes), nuns (peach coloured) and frequently by old men 779
(white) and old women (light chocolate coloured). On Sabbath days [575]
the particularly religious individuals of all ages, especially those
belonging to Buddhist lay societies, wear religious dress.

The term LONGYI means "lower apparel" and is applied to both 291
men's (PUSO) and women's (HTAMEIN). The men's festive longyi 292
TAUNG-SHAY-PUSO (taung measurement- twenty-puso) worn frequently
in the past and now reserved for special occasions was a double silk
PUSO 8 yards long. A special method of securing this garment about
the waist results in GABON ZA ("Sticking out piece") a fold which
protrudes 6 or more inches in the midline - only, however, when the
silk is crisp and stiff (new and/or finest heavy quality). This is
regarded as a very manly garment. Two styles of APAW EINGYI (over
jacket) men's jacket are worn. The "Peking" type meeting at the
mid-line is most common. A "Cantonese" type buttons over like the
women's jacket at the side.

Formerly every young man had tattooed thighs, extending in a 304
solid band of decoration from a few inches above the knees to the 562
hips. The motifs were frequently nat symbols. The main purpose 178
was to display manliness and courage since the process of tattooing,
done with a 3-pronged fork dipped in pigment was extremely painful.

304 The custom is dying out today; but, in the villages, the teen-age boy
562 frequently, on the encouragement of their family submit to the tattoo-
178 ing of a small area on the thigh. These decorations seen when the longyis are wrapped high were regarded as essential and those without them were openly criticised.

[751] A second type of tattooing consisting of potent symbols were, as still are, placed on the inner arm, back, or high forehead as a means of magical protection against harm. Snake, knife, cudgel and bullet proof motifs are common. Young girls frequently have the inner arm tattooed with such a charm.

838 Homo-sexuals are known as MEIN MA SHA ("women-half") and are
826 recognized by their effeminate gestures, "pretty" looks and clothing. They frequently wear THANAKHA face powder, tie their longyis in a simple tucked-in fold, and wear jewelry like the women. They are rare in villages but have banded together into a society in Rangoon. They appear to be tolerated but are scorned.

It is belcived that individuals known as MEIN-THE-PON-LAIN-HNEH-PON-LAIN ("Female sex- 2 sexes") exist . These persons are supposed to be alternately a man for one month, and a woman for the following
[775] month in a complete process of transformation. Both the MEIN MA SHA and these individuals result from illicit seduction activities in a previous existence - the MEIN MA SHA being the less sinful of the two.

792 The PONGYI dress consist of orange cotton cloth - one garment
291 being a longyi with a folled tie at the waist; the other a wide band
293 drapped as a robe. When begging the PONGYIS have a special arrangement of the robe which wraps the left arm and covers the neck region. The nuns wear a robe garment over a long sleeved EINGYI jacket of the same colour. They are frequently seen with a scarf folded on the head. Both orders carry orange-cloth (lacquered) parasols on long bamboo shafts, a string of beads and large palm leaf fans. The Pongyis carry leather bags suspended on a shoulder strap for personal effects. PONGYI slippers have a square toe, are made of stiff leather with reinforded soles.

[887] Religious women (including old women) wear chocolate coloured HTAMEINS, EINGYIS and carry a PUWA (a narrow scarf 4 of 5 feet in

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on top of the head. Scented hair oil is used by both sexes on special occasions.

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The HTAMEIN is regarded as "unworthy" for a man to touch. A severe insult is for a wife to request her husband to bring her HTAMEIN or to wash it. Drying HTAMEINS in the front of the house is never allowed; and it is strictly forbidden for this garment to touch any pongyi utensils. Parents instruct their boys never to pass under the strings of a line of which HTAMEINS are drying as such is thought to take away the masculine powers, and render the tattooed charms ineffective. Men and women's clothes are washed and stored separately.

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When a son neglects his mother after marriage she will complain with rage that he has not come out of the HTAMEIN and is under the HTAMEIN government of his wife.

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Women usually wear solid black HTAMEINS during menstruation. Boys, in jest, inform one of their companions that he may now become serious when the girl of his choice appears in a black dress for the first time.

Slippers of both sexes are regarded as "dirty" objects and are left outside of the houses. They are strictly prohibited in pagoda enclosures and land. When a girl is angry at a teasing boy(or quarreling with a woman)she will threaten to slap his face with her sandal. This is a double insult since the head is regarded as a particularly sacred part of the body. Barbers must ask permission and apologise for touching the heads of their customers.

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Western clothing has a higher status than Burmese clothing in certain situations and on certain occasions especially where western people are present in suits. However, for most occasions, everyday or special, the Burmese costume is preferred. When abroad the Burmese men usually wear western garb. The wearer of western clothes

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is often open to the taunt that he is "Bo Gyi (term for Englishmen) made in Burma". There is a strong feeling in all cases to be "properly" dressed and not to stand out from the rest of the group. This tendency is stronger in men than women who with their jewels and fine silks attempt to rival each other in a contest for social position.

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Burmese girl students who go abroad almost invariably wear their native costumes.

Westernization is invading the women's sphere more slowly than the men's. However, the use of lipstick is now appearing among the upperclass or town-people - along with modern brassieres and nylon ENGYIS with short sleeves. This is deplored by the more conservative as too revealing. The hair is shorter then formerly though the styles are only modified-western in type. A most important influence in the westernization of dress of the upper classes have been the American films.

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776 796 hold contributes as much as it wants to from one anna to eight annas. If more money is needed, people who have money contribute more. These offerings are given so as to keep danger away. It is not for merit. We don't know about that. One thing is certain; epidemics like plague and cholera never visited our village, and we have not had a single case of dacoity in our village in my whole lifetime.

"The headman makes the necessary arrangements, buys the black rice, coconuts, jaggery, Burmese tea leaves, candles, bananas, and places them on the special place prepared for them.

776 791 796 "We have not seen any person here in Rangoon being possessed by spirits, but we did have acquaintances in Pantanaw who were possessed, he loses consciousness of himself as a human being. He begins to tremble, and the Nat begins to speak through his mouth. I don't believe in the other Nats, but I do believe in U SHIN GYI because of the testimony of my own eyes. In the districts we place offerings to U SHIN GYI on a small bamboo framework made of four little bamboos each with a diameter about the size of your fountain pen. This framework is held together with pith of the mat fibre plant (HNEE). Sometimes sceptical people take a hand when the framework is being put up, and tie the HNEE very lightly, so as to break very easily. As a result the TAUNG high framework is so flimsy that it would collapse even if a bird were to jump on it. But the strange thing is that when a person becomes possessed and leaps onto the altar and dances about - nothing happens. In this condition, a person may perform on the harp (SAUNG) even though in his ordinary waking life he does not know how to play it. He also dances on glass tumblers. This took place before the whole of our family, together with about a hundred other spectators. Ko Ba THin's son, Htun Ngwe, who is of the same build as myself, leaped onto the bamboo framework and began eating the food laid out on it. On that occasion we had been expecting Ma Kyin Yone to be possessed, but she did not appear because her husband would not allow her to come. We had invited her to come because she had been possessed before. In our village these two were the only people who were possessed. The man was possessed once, and the woman about six times. On these occasions the whole village turns out to watch. [562]

"The altar is built on the evening previous to the ceremony. It is made of two levels, and is about 4 TAUNG square and one TAUNG high, and is used to hold 37 plates, each holding plantains, black rice, coconuts, jaggery, LAPHET (Burmese pickled tea), etc. The elder in charge then prays to the 37 Nats including U SHIN GYI for help. This ceremony has nothing to do with the phongyis, and the village phongyi is not invited. The two spheres are entirely different. The phongyi does not worship the nats. The systems of belief are entirely different. We worship both. The spirit does not appear at every ceremony - only when there is someone to possess. We had relied on Khin Yone but she did not appear and Htun Ngwe was possessed instead.

"When the nat spoke through Htun Ngwe we asked him about himself and his past life, but he refused to say anything, saying that it made him sad to think back on it.(the possessing nat's past). When the person recovered and we questioned him, he could not remember anything of all that had occured while he was in the trance. In the whole district there are only four or five people who have been ever possessed, and so the majority of people in the district have not witnessed a single case of possession of Nats.

776 796 "U SHIN GYI avoids eating flesh, does not drink liquor, and even when eating betel does not put tobacco (HSE) in his quid. Out of all the food that is offered to him, the nat partakes only of a little of the black rice, the remainder being shared by the members of the village. Enough food is prepared to feed the whole village, and a crier is sent through the village to announce a general invitation to everyone. When food has been

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must be getting a lot of demerit.

He then had to say something about the women's clothes in Rangoon. In Pathwe the girls did not dare to dress in these fashions. "I do not even dare to look at some of them." In Pathwe village there were no such things as girls with short sleeves, etc. Only the girls who had been to town affected them. The majority wore EIN-GYIS of thick material. In Rangoon one sometimes has the feeling that one is looking at little dolls".

U Myaing considers that there is a greater variety of means of earning money here. In Pathwe there were only a few ways in which one could earn money and these were almost wholly confined to working fish and paddy and their by products. There was of course frequent interchange of goods with people from other villages inland and with boats from Upper Burma.

U Myaing has been in Rangoon before and had seen the electric tramway and things that the others in the family had not seen before, but even he has seen comparatively little. The others have not seen so manydifferent kinds of automobiles, they have never seen the trains, rickshaws, pony-carts etc.

In the matter of clothing, they find a difference between Pathwe and Rangoon even in hair styles and in making up the face. U Myaing thinks that the people in Rangoon have inverted the order of things. According to him, a man can stay undressed exdept for a longyi and it can remain acceptable, while girls must wear clothing of thick material. This was the case in Pathwe, whereas in Rangoon men wear thick clothing and women wear garments made out of sheer material.

The life of Rangoon is beginning to influence girls who come from the villages, and they are beginning to imitate their sisters in town in the use of short sleeved jackets, lipstick and "waves". In Pathwe the usual facial make up is to daub the whole face with THANAT-KHA cream and leave it to dry. In Rangoon THANAT-KHA is used only as a powder base. Even Ma Aye Myaing has now a jacket which has sleeves that are elbow long.

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In Rangoon, the men's garments are of better quality. In Pathwe during the hot season the men stayed without any shirts on,

369 and women too did the same, and wore their HTAMEINS breast high.
291 Here except for the refugees, he does not see much of this except when
562 people are bathing in the public water hydrants. When it is hot the men
wear T shirts and the women wear light garments.

369 U Myaing says that the ordinary city dweller cannot do as much
464 hard labour as the average villager. For example, he cannot carry
461 a bag of rice on his shoulders if suddenly called upon to do so.

The workers from Rangoon are much more acute than the workers from the village. They speak and understand English and Hindustani and so get to know of any possible job long before the others. The villagers do not have these advantages, and so have to join work only later and they are placed to work under them.

563 As far as U Myaing is concerned, there is no racial animosity
464 towards Indians and workers of other races. This is due to the fact
that there is no racial discrimination on the part of the employers, the first suitable applicant being given the work.

369 He finds that Rangoon has a much more equable climate than
132 Pathwe. In Rangoon it is not as cold as in Pathwe, where in the cold
season it was very cold even though they lived in a proper house and kept all the doors and windows shut. He says that they would not be able in Pathwe to live in an open dwelling like they do at present.

369 Their relatives in Rangoon keep to themselves a great deal.
571 They work on their own and earn on their own. In Rangoon each family
602 has only sufficient for itself. "We cannot help them financially and
neither can they help us much. When we go on a visit they can invite us to join in a meal or to partake of sweet tea, but they would not be able to lend us fifty or a hundred rupees. In Pathwe we could lend each other any amount up till a thousand five hundred rupees and that free of interest. These loans also need to be repaid only when it is convenient to the debtor. It would be inconvenient to have to repay a loan while the money was in the form of goods."

159 U Myaings eldest daughter has returned to the camp because the
369 woman who owns the cheroot rolling business has temporarily closed it
602 down and gone to Pantanaw with goods like onions, prawns and textiles.
Since the girl is not sufficiently dexterous to find work elsewhere as

21: Htin Aung . E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

In characterization, the play is a great advance on Rama

536* and on the Siamese original of *Aindarwuntha*. There, as in the
178 Sanskrit plays, the depiction of character was almost unknown. Rama was the perfect hero, Sita a lifeless damsel, Ravana a boastful villain. In Myawaddi's *Eenaung* the hero is shown to be full of faults, otherwise he is still lifeless and uninteresting as Rama. However, the characters of the women, the various loves of the prince, are well portrayed. True, the women pass swiftly through the play, often the interesting heroine never appears again after but one scene, and there is no character development; but the play is a rich portrait gallery where we see live women, who must have laughed and sorrowed at the court. The Sanskrit plays were written by men who did not or could not write of the miseries women suffered at the court, as the king's wives. They wrote from the point of view of men, and they would have it that to be the king's beloved was to reach the limits of womanly happiness. The Siamese court drama followed the Sanskrit [644] in this respect. In *Eenaung*, however, we have a young courtier sympathizing with the women of the court, gently satirizing the king and showing up the disadvantages of being the king's love. The sorrows and laughter of the court maidens are well shown. Gentle satire, pathos, and light comedy keep the play alive.

The contribution made by *Eenaung* to the development of Burmese drama was no less in importance than that made by *Rama*. Of course *Eenaung* itself owed a great deal to *Rama*, but without Myawaddi's play, it seems rather doubtful that *Rama* could have done so much for Burmese drama, for the interest in human psychology and character, so essential to good drama, was absent in *Rama*. Moreover, *Eenaung* taught the Court to break away from the Siamese tradition and to develop a native drama with borrowings from and imitations of the Siamese court drama. Because many of the incidents in the play were invented by the author and not borrowed from the original Siamese court romance, it also pointed out the possibilities of an invented story as the subject of a play. In short, Myawaddi paved the way for the coming of U Kyin U and U Pon Nya.

Eenaung at once inspired others to imitate it. Many plays modelled on it were written by courtiers and produced at court. Although, unfortunately, none of these plays has come down to us, extracts in the form of dramatic speeches and songs have come down, and from those we can be certain that many of the court plays were not much [562] inferior to that of the Minister Myawaddi. The most famous of the imitators was the Lady Khin Sôn, herself a scholar and poet of much

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

renown, whose literary works were worthy rivals in popularity to those of Myawaddi.[1] The native court plays were so popular that even *Rama* soon fell under their sway. Through their influence, the tradition of rigidly following the Siamese version was broken and destroyed, and adaptations of *Rama* in the style of *Eenaung* came to be presented at the Burmese court. 536* 178

5. THE COURT DRAMA REACHES THE PEOPLE

The latter half of Bodawpaya's reign saw the court drama becoming national instead of being confined to the narrow limits of the palace. 536* 178 The national interest in the drama was now so great that the king had to create a new ministry, that of the stage. The new minister greatly developed the puppet-show, which is described in a later chapter. The drama became a regular entertainment at the court, and a dramatic performance in the palace came to be looked upon as a semi-State function. Not only was the drama now looked upon as a national entertainment at the court, but the court drama itself was being spread all over the country through governors and administrative officials imitating the court and holding little dramatic performances of their own. The greatest gift the court performances gave to the acting profession was to raise its status. The actors were still looked upon with prejudice as being nothing more than beggars, but they were no longer considered as being only a little better than rogues and vagabonds. Many travelling companies also came to be looked upon with less disfavour, for they would style themselves 'the King's actors' or 'those who had acted before such-and-such a minister on such-and-such an occasion'. For their ability many actors were given rewards of money and some sort of decoration, which might be a medal or a special dress, and these the actors would wear during their performances with great pride. The Burmese actors of the period were very much in the same position as those acting companies

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[1] The fact that the Lady Khin Sôn was the rival of Myawaddi in the literary circles of the court, reflects the difference in character, as far as women were concerned, between the Burmese and most other oriental courts. Burmese women have enjoyed equal rights with men from prehistoric times: 'when greater races bound the feet or veiled the faces of their women, or doubted if she had a soul, the Burmese held her free and enthroned her as chieftainess and queen' (Harvey). Perhaps this difference in the atmosphere of the court had much to do with the sympathetic portrayal of women by Myawaddi in his *Eenaung*. In India, the fact that women were given an inferior social position is reflected in the absence of Sanskrit plays by women. 562● 644 101

536* at dawn. By that time the king recovers his composure and desires no revenge. He inquires whether the executions have taken place, and on learning that the couple still live, he orders that they should only be banished from the kingdom.

This was the first play of U Pon Nya, and we find in it his dramatic art only half-developed. The play is full of faults, and by common consent, it is considered the least artistic of his work. He fails to portray character, and the persons in the play appear to be mere puppets. This fault is seen most clearly in the first two scenes where the brothers speak in turn, without passion, without life. Paduma is very unsatisfactory. He is too good, too inhumanly good. In the earlier scenes, he is absolutely without life. In the third scene, however, where he and his princess are running away to safety, Paduma comes to life, and both appear real and human. After that, he becomes uninteresting again, and he keeps on preaching sermons, which must have been rather boring to his wife. In the last scene he comes to life again. The princess is not so unsatisfactory. It is true that she is portrayed only from the outside, and the sudden change from a good to a wicked women is illogical; but that is what U Pon
536* Nya wants to show. He wants to show that there is no logic in a
● 562 woman's character. It is bad from the very beginning, and it will always be bad; a man should not have any faith in women, and if a man has such faith, he is sure to be soon disillusioned, and he has only himself to blame for such disappointment.

U Pon Nya's chief object in this play is satire, but he fails to achieve his aim, because the satire does not convince us. It is too bitter to convince. His failure is surprising when one remembers that he is the greatest literary satirist in Burmese literature. When he wrote this play, he was already very successful as a satirist. The merit of his best satire is his humour, which prevents any suggestion of bitterness, and yet in *Paduma* humour is absent and bitterness is the chief note. The play by no means expresses the real attitude of the dramatist towards women. It expresses only a temporary mood. He was a great favourite with the ladies of the court, and among his friends and patrons were many women noted for their nobility of character: the chief queen of Mindon, the most loved person at that time, was one of them. Moreover, in his other plays he shows his respect for women; the wife of the water-seller and Ma-di in *Waythandaya* are charming and noble women.

U Pon Nya wrote this play as a warning and admonition to those ladies of the court, junior queens, who were indulging in 536* romantic intrigues with courtiers. It is amusing to reflect that even 562 as a monk, U Pon Nya himself was suspected of having had amorous adventures, and he lost his life through his friendship with the charming ladies of the governor's household. The first performance of the play was received with an uproar of protest on the part of the court-ladies, and they clamoured for the destruction of every copy of the play. But there was much that was new and interesting in it, and the general opinion was that a new dramatist of rich promise had arisen. Therefore the king, before whom the performance was made, did not yield to the clamours of the ladies, but ordered that their request to U Pon Nya asking him to write another play praising the virtues in women, should be complied with. As a result, he wrote *Waythandaya*.

The great merit of the play is in its lyrical qualities (which I am 536* unable to reproduce in my translation). The vigour of the verse, its 195 rhythm, the harmonious and elaborate rhyme scheme, the richness of the imagery, all join together to make this play the most lyrical in Burmese drama. However, these very qualities were the butt of criticism by contemporary critics who, used to the straightforward and clear style of U Kyin U and his imitators, held that too rich a language was a fault in a play, for there would be a danger of conveying wrong or obscure meanings to the audience. As those [565] critics belonged to the 'people's' stage, they were of course thinking of the less learned audience outside the court circles. There is no doubt that in some scenes of *Paduma* the charge of difficulty and obscurity of language is quite justified. For example, when the crocodile and Paduma speak about women loving dogs and pigs, U Pon Nya is speaking only metaphorically, but one realizes it is so only on a second or third reading of the play. But the language in the scene where Paduma and his princess are running away to safety, is as clear as it is beautiful.[1]

3. *THE WATER-SELLER*

The story of this play also is taken unchanged from a *Jataka*. A 536* prince returns to his city after a stay at a university in India. As he rests for a few minutes outside the gates, a water-seller enters, and in a soliloquy says that he is just entering the city to sell water and earn

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[1] A translation of this play is given in appendix v.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Pegu, many English officials asked to be my father's guests, for 536* 178
although they had been some years in Burma and heard so much of the puppet show, they had never been able to find one. In 1929, on inquiry, I found that there was not one puppet troupe in Lower Burma, though there were two in Upper Burma; of these, only one was giving performances occasionally, the members of the other being content to earn their living by some other means.

Before considering the probable history of the puppet show before 536* 101
the time of Bodawpaya, it is necessary to give an account of the puppet-shadow show of the east. The home of the puppet show was India. Pischel in *The Home of the Puppet Stage* even contends that the Sanskrit shadow drama preceded the drama proper, but that theory is not accepted by Dr Keith and other scholars. From India, with Hindu expansion overseas, the puppet-shadow show spread, together with the epics and the drama, to Malaya and the East Indies. In Java it found a permanent home, and there shadow drama is still very popular. From Java it spread to Siam and other countries of Indo-China, to Persia, Turkey, Arabia and Japan. Perhaps it even spread to Europe; at least the English Punch is a direct descendant of the Turkish puppet Karageuz, who himself was a descendant of the Sanskrit puppet Vidusaka. To give an idea of the puppet-shadow show, I will give a description of a Java shadow performance.

As 'stage' there is a huge curtain with a light behind it. The puppets are put between the light and the curtain, on which their shadows are thrown. 'The light shines through the transparent material of which his (the puppet's) many-coloured garments are made. His shadow on the curtain glows with such bright hues within the framework of dark shells that he looks like a figure in stained glass. . . . In the middle of the huge curtain is seen a fantastic vine with interlacing branches. Monkeys and birds climb on it, and beneath it two grim guards stand watch. When the play begins, the strange shadow tree vanishes. The stage manager is the *Dalang*. He sits on a mat and gives the play.[1] Back of him is the orchestra to accompany
the explanations of the *Dalang*. Whenever a new figure enters the [534]
orchestra plays. The men in the audience are allowed to sit on the right of the *Dalang* and see the actual puppets perform, and the
children sit at the *Dalang's* left hand. But the women are not permitted to see the real puppets act. They see only the shadows on the [562] ●

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[1] i.e. he recites the words of the play.

593 husband's kinfolk. Post-marital residence is independent and is decided very
[591] largely on the basis of economic opportunity. The wife's opportunities for social
intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence
is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages
marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the
[574] chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by
[582] visits from time to time; such marriages seldom unite persons from villages that
are very far apart. The very structural features of bilaterality and absence of
extension militate against inequality and male domination.

● Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in
562 contrast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes
593 seems to be the resultant historically of two patterns of thought. One is an
apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal
[428] inheritance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of
[586] property upon divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and
an absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from
the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese conceptions: whatever
[177] ideas of male superiority exist in Burmese life stem from Buddhist notions of
[775] reincarnation. Although Buddha never expressed himself explicitly on the matter,
it is taken for granted that only a male can attain Nirvana, since Gautama
Buddha, who attained that state, was a male.

462 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as
592 the preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and
clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the
family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

Certain observances and taboos, reflective of deference to males, are expected
593 of the female partner in marriage. She is careful that her lower garments do not
784 touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her
husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the
husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions
are followed as a matter of course by Burmese wives and will be broken
deliberately only as an act of spite by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband
for some reason.

593 Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is
837 a tendency towards a double standard of sexual behavior. A husband who has
reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely
[586] to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a

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16. THE FIRST STEP.

of an inch thick. This custom is on the decline, and the ears of boys are not so generally pierced as they used to be. The *naddung* or women's ear-plug of gold is being replaced by the *nagát* with its slender stem (No. 241). With eldest-born girls the fête is frequently deferred until they are twelve or fourteen, and is then celebrated with all the more splendour (p. 14).

862 Burman children are not
weaned until the second or
854 third year. Nevertheless they begin to receive solid food as soon as they will
take it. The illusion prevails
that the earlier they do so the
stronger they will be. It is a
[165] chief source of infant sickness
and mortality, and of the smallness
of the families reared. A
curious feature of Burman sociality
is the promiscuous suckling
of infants in the circle of relatives
and friends.

855 Children's heads are shaved
858 in more or less fanciful ways up
to the ages of ten or twelve, after
302 which the hair is allowed to grow
long.

858 The road-fronts of the houses
857 are always peopled with children.
Children are equals and are free
524 to roam through the neighbours'
houses and plots, where they are
kindly noticed. Adults take in-
[854] terest in their games, and make
kites and reels, boats, carts and
other simple toys for them.

17. THE WOODEN CRADLE (SAUNGBAN).

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29. NOVICES MAKING THE ROUND FOR DAILY FOOD (P. 18).

CHAPTER III

ADOLESCENCE

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30. THAMI-U ARRAYED FOR HER FETE.

BETWEEN the ages of ten and sixteen Burman lads enter upon the monastic novitiate, an occasion celebrated with a brilliant fête. The adoption of a religious life by girls is much less general, even for the short time it is embraced by the youths; and when it is adopted, there is no ceremony. But a holiday answering to that of the boy's novitiate is held in honour of the girl, especially when she is the first-born child—*thamí-u*. In her case the ear-boring ceremony, if not the piercing itself, is deferred to the age of ten or twelve. The child, equipped in royal attire, or an imitation of it, and wearing a queen's crown (*sibôn*), is the centre of a great gathering of relatives and friends, who are entertained with music and plays.

858 The lad who has prepared to renounce the world for a season, or it may
792 be for life, is called *shinláung*. The *shinláung* festivals usher in the religious
796 or lenten season—*wá*, June to September—the season of rain in Bahár,

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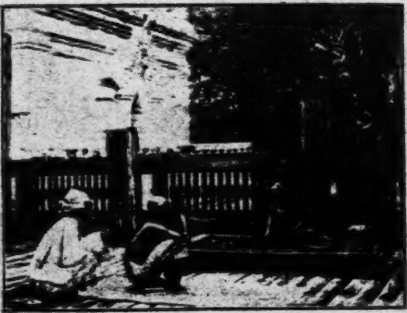

27. SHINLAUNG RENEWING HIS PRAYER.

the world, but not from observation by the world. Great as is the homage accorded to him by the laity, a recluse who should disgrace his cloth—a thing almost unknown — would be promptly unfrocked by them.

For their sustenance the novices and regular recluses depend upon alms. They receive these in kind and according to daily need. Their appeal is mute. The morning after his reception the novice with his brethren will halt in front of his own parents' house and the houses of the neighbours to receive such dole of food as is offered (No. 29). He will not look to right or left, but keep his eyes rooted on the ground, making no sign beyond raising the cover of his alms-bowl. The recluse may not ask for anything whatever, nor even express a predilection. The food, ripe or ready-cooked, as the case may be, is doled indiscriminately into the *thabéit* from the east side, usually by a woman of the house. A woman should not stand in the shadow of a recluse, of
a shrine, *zedi*, temple or image. She should not occupy an upper floor when a
[562] recluse happens to be beneath, nor enter a *Thein*, nor occupy a higher place with
respect to men (p. 72). Food given in a religious spirit, as above described, is
[576] called *sun*. The recluses when collecting *sun* are generally followed by a couple of scholars bearing a yoke and basket to receive larger offerings on behalf of the monastery (No. 41).

28. GOYIN MAKING OBEISANCE.

792 Those probationers who re-
main in the monastery for several
871 years—reckoned by Lents (*wa*)—
and who aspire to full membership
[805] of the Assembly, read with the
779 recluse Pâli texts of the Tripitaka,
and the commentaries on these,
[576] and commit portions, sometimes
whole books of the canon, to
memory. Recluses of standing
and also laymen take part in these
exercises.

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85. POTHUDAW.

been brought into a pseudo-connection with Buddhism by certain western neophytes of the Tibetan cult, are unheard of in Burma, which is the stronghold of primitive tradition.

Pôthudaw observe fewer *thila* than *yathé*. They make their appeal with a gong of triangular shape (*kyìzi*, Nos, 22, 86), which spins on the string it hangs by, and emits a high and sustained throbbing note. *Pôthudaw* eat in the forenoon only. They accept alms in money and in kind, for which they carry baskets with a shoulder-yoke. They wear a white robe, shave the head, and pluck out the beard. *Pôthudaw* shift for themselves in *zayats* about the temples and seldom remain long in one place.

Mèthila are female celibates who
792 observe a rule parallel to that of the *Pôthudaw*. They shave the head. Their
● 562 robe is like that of the other celibates with the addition of a jacket. The cloth
is dyed a faint red. Both they and the *pôthudaw* are generally individuals who
have lost their family ties. In some places *kyaungs* are provided for *mèthila*,
[871] where they keep schools for girls. A few are possessed of learning. *Mèthila*
are about as numerous as *pôthudaw*, and both together are about one-tenth
to one-twentieth as numerous as *yahán*, and several times more so than
yathé. There is no class of female recluses answering to *yahán*.

86. METHILA AT WORSHIP.

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567 *Payadyún* form colonies in the vicinities of the principal shrines and of the cemeteries of large towns. They are the descendants of temple slaves, the condition to which captives in war were reduced both by the Burman and the Taláing races during their incessant

153. THE CHALLENGE (see p. 177).

the young wife's home, the lad working for her parents. 591
As family comes and other daughters marry, the elder
pairs are established in houses of their own. Married
people are designated *ein-daung*—householders. Marriage 581
makes no difference in the names and their prefixes. 592
Everyone marries in Burma; the census of 1891 gave
1,306,722 husbands to 1,307,292 wives. The same census 551
gave 102 females to 100 males of the Burman (so classed 162
as Buddhist) population. (In Burma prostitution is con- [548]
fined to the large towns.)

A family of seven is considered large. The average [524]
number of house-occupants is 5.5. The cost of living of 592
a Burman village household is 100 to 200 Rs. a year. In
the towns the well-to-do spend 600 to 1000 Rs. and more; 511
and at the present day keep a servant or two for the 357
rough work, generally natives of India. Such accumula- 556
tions of wealth as are made by individuals in India and
other countries with a plutocracy and a proletariate are
not paralleled among the Burmans. Nevertheless in-
dividuals amass tens of thousands of rupees, which for
the most part they spend on works of 587
religious merit. Monogamy is the received
and almost universal practice in Burma.
Second-wives are taken by a proportion of
the officials and men of wealth. Hence [562] ●
it comes that the Burmans wonder more
at the moderation of Europeans than at [291]
such license as they indulge. This license
is not nearly so great as in India, but it is
more open, corresponding to the higher
status of the women of Burma, and thus
it provokes more scandal in comparison.
Unions of this sort among the Burmans are
merely by mutual consent. A separate establishment in a different quarter of the
town is maintained for the second wife or
concubine (*maya-ngè*). Her children are
under no disability, but she is not acknowledged by the first, and generally older,
wife (*mayajî*), whose husband's love she is
said to have stolen.

154. AN "ORIGINAL."

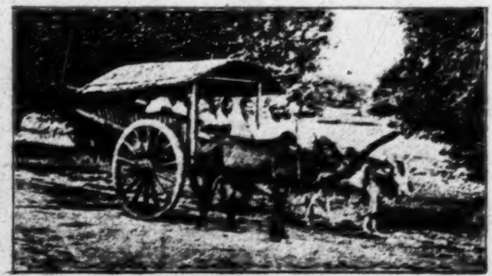
000 586 said to have *stolen*. The vast majority of couples go through life faithfully and helpfully. The best influences of regular family life are developed. The dissolutions of marriage which take place are chiefly on account of incompatibility. Sometimes the husband and wife merely drift apart. Such a separation, when of long standing, is accepted and the parties are free to marry again. In acute and irreconcilable differences the parties apply to the elders of the place for divorce. It becomes the elders' duty to make three efforts to dissuade the couple from their purpose. Failing in these, they pronounce separation (*kwá byí*). Pickled tea is eaten, as in the case of the marriage. The boys of the union go with the father, the girls with the mother. Common goods are divided equally; her dower and the proceeds of her independent trade and investments are at the woman's own disposal from first to last. When she can manage—as she often contrives to do—the mother keeps and provides for all her children, but they retain a lien on the father's support. There is no

● 562 woman so well able to shift for herself as the woman of Burma. Her independent status would seem to be the corollary of her independent ability

[517 493] to manage by herself. Nowhere else is the wife more prized; nowhere is woman better able to make terms with man. Although under the Hindu code of Manú which the Burmans nominally follow, the status of woman is only the Indian

[517 505]

155. PLEASURE PARTY BY BOAT.



156. PLEASURE PARTY BY CART.

157. DOMESTIC FLOWER-STAND (NYAUNG-YE-O, PP. 6, 63).

one, no disability of a practical kind exists 562 for her. But it is the aspiration of every woman to transmigrate as a man in the [775] next phase of existence (*bawa*, p. 43). As the state of a man is thought a more desirable one, so it is inferred that her [531 life in the previous incarnation has brought the woman's state upon her. 353] How deep and tender is the poetry which the idea of transmigration weaves into the life of the Buddhist may be judged from the example at the close of Chapter XXIII. of *The Soul of a People.* [736] Orphans are adopted by relatives, and in default of such, never fail to find foster-parents. [462] The division of labour between the sexes is the common one of out-door and in-door. Wherever circumstances permit, women are relieved of hardship; the sheltered places in boats and carts belong to the women and children. The great middle zone of commerce is neutral; women embark in wholesale trade, besides transacting the bulk of the retail trade. In certain localities women do the lighter part of the out-door work, and in the poorer districts of the dry zone they share in the heavy labour. Women are accorded precedence among men according to the standing they have acquired by marriage or by their independent efforts. [875] The *Kyaungamá*—the woman who has founded and who supports a school—enjoys a deference on all sides proportioned to the munificence of her gift. [271] Women mix freely among men but are never jostled by them. At great gatherings men and women group apart. [521] The Burman women are smart at repartee, and hold their own in the perpetual banter that goes on between the sexes.

158. WAYSIDE WATER-STAND IN THE CITY (PP. 31, 63).

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237. TOWN SILVERSMITH.

306 of plain gold bangles (*lek-
326 kauk*), and their ear-plugs
consist of a roll of sheet-gold coiled to the thickness of a finger. The Burmans admire a red-yellow gold with dull surface. They enhance the effect by a red colouring of the interstices of the work, in the same way as the Chinese do. Neck ornaments (*bayè*)
306 are of several kinds. The
commonest one used to be the thick roll of gold filigree, worn in front of the neck. This is now replaced by *bayè* of several chains, for the most part jewelled. On the breast is worn the broad *dalizán*, also formerly of filigree, but now of jewels and pearls. Strings of real and imitation pearls are worn; and jewelled pins and gold or jewelled combs in the hair. Rings are worn on the fingers and
● [562] gold filigree buttons of the Chinese type on the jackets. The last two are
the only ornaments now used by men. Anklets are worn by children.

175 Gold and silver coinage on a European model was adopted by the kings of
Burma about the middle of the nineteenth century—the "peacock" coins, struck
436 from dies engraved in Paris. Rough coins of lead used to circulate. The coins
177 shown in No. 238 are those of Arakán kings from 1500 to 1750 A.D., from the
collection of the late Mr. C. H. White. Before the introduction of coinage,

238. SILVER COINS OF THE ARAKAN KINGS.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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[562]
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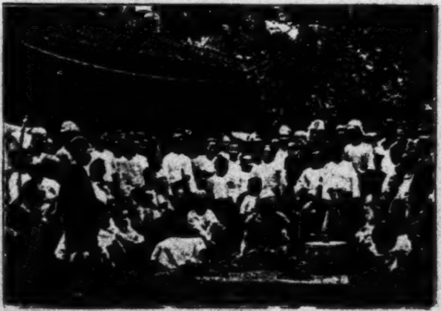
408. CHINESE DICE (NIDAUNG).

ment associated with sot (*ayet-thauk*), next after which is *beinza*—opium-eater. Women do not often play chess or cards; they have a game called *pasit* (beetle-fight), somewhat resembling backgammon.

Games of pure hazard are in great favour, especially at festival times. Chinese and Shan settlers start gambling-dens for the dissolute youth, with Chinese dice (*Nîdaung, Angalôn*, No. 406), and the thirty-six animal lottery (*tî, thônzè-chaukkaung kazâ*), symbols intelligible to every nation and the meanest capacity. For *angalôn* there is a paper or cloth with compartments for six different figures of animals on which money is staked, corresponding to similar figures on a wooden cube, which is shaken in a box.

541 The showmen in Burma are the conjuror and the snake-charmer. The Burman juggler (*myet-hlè sayâ*) makes no pretence of occult powers, not even to children. His name implies that his movements "elude the eye;" but his legerdemain does not attain to the art of the Indian and Chinese jugglers. The snake-charmer, on the other hand (*âlambè sayâ*), pretends to be protected by magic. He is tattooed all over with snakes; he has slits at the side of his tongue which he shows, and in other ways he plays upon credulity. [304] It has been alleged that the snake-men inoculate themselves with the venom, but this is not authenticated, though it is known from the experiments of Calmette and Fraser that immunity can be produced in this way. The cobra (*mwye-hauk*) is exhibited, but only when the hamadryad (*ngan-bôk*), a much larger species of the same family, cannot be procured (p. 96). The snakes are exhibited in their natural



409. BURMAN JUGGLER.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

a simple, straightforward affirmation, but it is not denial. No religion 779a
could so persist if it merely brought man's elemental aspirations to a 775
sharp cliff and threw them over.

5. Burmese Buddhism

If there are good reasons for approaching the subject of religious paradox by a study of Buddhism, there are also good reasons for considering Buddhism as it appears in Burma where it is still a living and a dominant religion. 121

In the study of great religious traditions there is always need to maintain a balance between regard for the written texts and for the living expression. To consult one without the other is to misinterpret both. What the Christmas stories in the gospels mean to Christians cannot be fully discerned if they are isolated from Christmas observance any more than the Jātaka stories of Buddhism can be fully appreciated until they are read in the context of popular faith, with its drama and poetry. And what an entirely misleading impression of monastic Buddhism one might get from the Abhidhamma literature unless one has seen something of the life of a Buddhist monastery! This balance, as our Burmese critic observed, has not always been maintained in the study of Southern Buddhism.

Burma provides exceptional opportunities for such a study. "If anybody wants to know and see Buddhism as conceived and preached by the Buddha himself so far as the Saṃgha life goes," says a recent writer, "one can see a nearest approach to it in the monasteries of Burma.... Of all the Indianised lands of South-eastern Asia, Burma is indeed the only country where monastic Buddhism of the Theravāda nikāya survives to this day in its pristine purity."[24] And the same writer emphasises the impact of this monastic life on Burmese life and culture. [792]

In Burma, eighty-five per cent of the inhabitants are Buddhists. Of these, one in every hundred is a Buddhist monk. Go where you will, you find the yellow robe of the Order, the pagoda gleaming white across the plain or on the hillside, the monastery in every village, intimately related to the life of the people. This has been the situation for centuries. Here one can see Buddhism in action; one can try to interpret its symbols in the light of the very real, if rustic, civilisation which it has shaped and maintained. Burma is one of the most interesting countries in the Orient. Its people are literate. There is freedom from caste, and, for that matter, scarcely any class system. In the days of the monarchy, "when you left the king, you dropped at once to the villager."[25] An Englishman observed, [162] 779* 565 562 779#

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[24] Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, chap. VII, p. 262.

[25] Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, chap. IX, p. 106.

565 in the middle of the last century, that Burmese women not only enjoyed
562 a much freer and higher position than elsewhere in the East but, in some
779* matters, had attained rights that their sisters in England were still seeking to obtain.[26] These and similar aspects of Burmese life must be attributed in large degree to the dominant influence of Buddhism in a country which has been left for hundreds of years, shut away from the surrounding world by its seaboard and mountain barriers, to work out its own salvation with only occasional interference from outside until modern times.

779* It is possible that the first Buddhist monastery in Burma was established
174 more than two thousand years ago. While we may be sceptical of the legend which attributes the conversion of the first Burmese disciples to
177 the Buddha himself, there is perhaps less reason than formerly to question the persistent Burmese tradition that missionaries were sent from India to Burma after the Third Great Council in the time of Aśoka. We have, at any rate, shreds of reliable evidence relating to the early centuries of the Christian era. In Burma, as elsewhere, the archaeologist has been active in recent years and there are also illuminating references in Chinese and other texts. Examining the evidence now available, Mr. Nihar-Ranjan Ray has presented a substantial argument for the conclusion that Buddhism was introduced to Burma possibly in Aśoka's day, probably by the third century A.D. and certainly by the fifth century A.D.[27] In these earlier centuries, Burma was parcelled into small kingdoms, and all that can be said is that, at certain capitals, there were strong centres of Buddhist influence.[28]

175 It is, however, sufficient for our present purpose to be able to trace the
779* dominating influence of Buddhism throughout the country from the eleventh century onwards. In this century, the turning point in Burmese
177 story, the curtain of history lifts to reveal A-naw-ra-hta, the Burmese Constantine, moving southwards from his capital at Pagan to vanquish the king of Thaton and annex his dominion. According to the Burmese chroniclers, the motive for this advance was not mere lust of conquest but zeal for the true faith. King A-naw-ra-hta had been converted by a monk from the south, Shin Arahan of Thaton. But 'without the scriptures there can be no study, without study there can be no intuition.' To obtain these scriptures, the Pali scriptures, A-naw-ra-hta must needs subdue his rival at Thaton who possessed them.

000 What is of further importance for our present inquiry is the fact that

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[26] Forbes, *British Burma and Its People*, chap. III, p. 55.

[27] Ray, op. cit. chap. I, pp. 33ff.

[28] *Ibid.*, chap. I, pp. 33ff., 81; cf. Taw Sein Kho, *Census of India Report* (Burma 1901), XII, 32.

792 the monastery. It is a day of excited celebration. Recalling the Great
881 Renunciation, when Gautama left the royal court in his quest for truth, the boy, attired in princely robes, is feasted by his family and friends until the moment when he casts his finery aside to don the yellow robe of the Order.[21]

[301] Girls experience a similar ceremonial initiation, when (to the accom-
562 paniment of vigorous music) their ears are pierced to take the ear-rings
881 which are the sign of womanhood. They cannot attend the monastic
779* schools with the boys, but other means are found for their education, and they certainly do not lag behind their brothers in intelligence, character
871 or Buddhist zeal. Mrs Hla Oung recounts the story of a little maid taken to the monastery to be reminded of the five precepts, after some childish misdemeanour. (The monk was benign. "There was the faintest suspicion of a smile on his calm face, to show, I suppose, that her backsliding was not to be taken as a defection from the faith.") The 'charity of learning' seems, then, to be shared by girls as well as boys. The status, freedom and privileges of Burmese women have already been remarked and Mrs Hla Oung affirms vigorously that "the life of the Burmese woman is bound up in her religion. Buddhism has formed the character of the Burmese woman.... There are few Burmese women, even in the villages, who are unable to read and write," and the Buddhist scriptures form the ground work of their studies.[22]

772 Not only are the monks numerous, but they are dispersed throughout
871 the country. Every village has at least one monastery, and sometimes more. The educational influence of the Order has been, therefore, both
178 organised and ubiquitous. In more recent times this influence has been challenged by new conditions. Government and mission schools have intervened, and the modern Burmese boy may only remain in the monastery as a novice for a brief, token period. But during the centuries which shaped the Burmese character and outlook, the monks as educators had no serious rivals.

792 Nor has their ministry to the community been confined to education.
[757] Herbs and potions from the monastery are held in high esteem, especially
737 in Upper Burma.[23] The monastery also serves as alms-house and asylum.

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672 [21] For a good description of this ceremony v. Ananda Metteya, quoted by G. Appleton, *Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 22–23.

[22] Ma M. Hla Oung, "The Women of Burma," *Buddhism*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 61 (September, 1903, Rangoon); cf. a later series by Daw Mya Sein, "Kin Sein Hla," *Burma Today*, published by the Burma Government in India, 1944, in which the influence of the Monastery is not so strongly emphasised.

[23] "Theirs is faith cure rather than medicine, "writes a Burmese correspondent, who cites cures from snake-bite, leprosy and hydrophobia.

671 her own choice. The head of the Burmese family can also give
593 away children under the age of puberty or majority to another
597 family for adoption, but when the child attains the age of
puberty or majority, he or she has the option to choose in which
family (i.e. his original family or his adoptive family) he
671 will remain. Acquisitions by members of the family accrue
593 to the family, but as in Roman and Hindu laws, certain classes
428 of acquisition by members of the family accrue to the acquirer
and not to the family. Gifts from grandparents, from the
king, and in certain cases, from strangers, and earnings through
exercise of skill in the arts and in astrology, medicine, advocacy,
and alchemy accrue to the acquirer. When a member
of the family wishes to leave the family, there is no necessity
to gain the assistance of a court of law. By mutual consent
among the members, he is permitted to leave and he is given
his share of the family estate. When the whole family decides
to break up also, no formality is required, and by general consent,
the family estate is divided between the members according
to the rules of law pertaining to the partition of an estate
into various shares.

671 One of the main features of Burmese society is the high
562 status of its women. Unlike the situation in Hindu or Chinese
society, the Burmese woman has never been a mere chattel
at the disposal of the Burmese man. Since prehistoric times
Burmese women have enjoyed an equality of status, rank,
and opportunity with men. Under the Burmese kings, the
women held high office, and served often as headman, chieftainess,
[773] and queen. In Burmese folktales dealing with strange
disputes and wonderful decisions, which are known as Juristic
Tales, the judge is a woman, namely Princess Learned-in-the-Law.
At the present day, all the learned professions are open
to women, and approximately 25 per cent of the students at
the University of Rangoon are women.

671 The high status of women in Burmese society is reflected
583 in the Burmese customary law relating to marriage, divorce,
586 and inheritance. In Burmese law, marriage is purely a civil
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contract, founded on the consent of the man and woman to 671
openly "eat and live together." Religion has nought to do 583
with the marriage, and no special ceremony is necessary, and 586 428
therefore in a court of law proof of marriage is not to be found in certificates of documents or evidence of a marriage ceremony, but in the testimony of witnesses that the man and woman lived together as man and wife. No Burmese man or woman can be forced into marriage without his or her consent. After a son has attained the age of puberty, or a daughter the age of majority, even the consent of the parents is no longer necessary. Divorce results without much formality when both the husband and the wife mutually agree to part. Burmese jurists in their writings often describe the husband as the lord of the wife, but that seems to be mere opinion, and they often advise the wife to obey her husband, but it does not mean that their advice is always followed. The wife has a right to divorce her husband without his consent, if he is guilty of cruelty or serious matrimonial misconduct. On divorce, the wife takes a substantial share of the joint estate, and if she should marry again, she remains absolute owner of her estate from her previous marriage, and does not share it with her second husband. But although divorce therefore is comparatively easy, and the wife enjoys an important position in the family, divorces have always been rare, and an atmosphere of cordiality and harmony prevails in the Burmese family.

Burmese women have always possessed full rights of in- 671
heritance. As the husband and wife are the heirs of each other, 562
on the husband's death, the wife inherits a major share of the 428
family estate, and full authority as head of the family if the family decides not to disintegrate and partition the estate. On the death of the surviving parent, the daughters have full rights of inheritance in competition with their brothers. As the Burmese customary law has never recognized a right to dispose of property by will, these rights of inheritance cannot be defeated in any way.

These, then, briefly are the main features of Burmese cus- 000

342 tends across the entire front. The veranda has its own roof, and can frequently be closed against the outside with portable bamboo mat walls. It serves as an easily accessible place, even for strangers, also as a workroom and shop, and as a favorite gathering place for the family during the daytime. From there, ladders or steps lead to the elevated rear section of the house, where the livingroom, the bedrooms and the kitchen (mibo) are. The latter is usually [343] detached. It opens to the rear, and has its own platform and means of ascent. The cooking stove [354] consists of a flat box (4) filled with sand and

4. Burmese, Shan, and the mountain tribes of Burma and Assam, also the Siamese and Malayans use the flat, sand-filled fireplace; India and China the mud stove. This is probably due to pile dwellings versus level ground architecture.

ashes on which the wood fire is lit. During the dry season the cooking is done preferably in the open, near or under the house. The simple village house has frequently only one inside room. The veranda, especially where the water level during the rainy season makes it mandatory, is frequently found to be an open wide platform of the same height as the rest of the house (1 1/4 to 1 1/2 meters) (Plate IV, 2). The peasant keeps his rice stores either in the kitchen wing, [343] or in small sheds (also on piles) close to the house where the rice containers, the mortars, pestles for the husking, etc. are kept. Under the piles of the house usually stands the weaving loom on which the women and girls (5) work

● [562] 5. As to the women who theoretically (in accordance with religious principles) though not in practice, rank

●[562] below the man and are not accorded full value as human beings, one does not consider this a degredation, although to be under inhabited floors (see above)'would be considered as a disgrace for others.

342 industriously. Weaving in Burma is still one of the most important home industries. Otherwise [231] the room under the house is used only for storage of household and agricultural implements, and also at night as a stable for buffaloes and cattle if there are no protective roofs provided for them. On top of such roofs the fodder grass is piled up.

A large Burmese house (Plate IV, 3) gives the impression of a composite of several individual buildings (6) standing on a platform. This is

[171] 6. The accounts of P.A. Thompson, Lotus Land (London, 1906), p. 40, and F. Swettenham, British Malaya (London, 1907), p. 151, show that this Burmese house-type with its detached sections, surrounded by a platform, is also customary in the lowlands of Siam and on the Malayan Peninsula. It is also known in Sumatra, according to M. Moszkowski, "Beiträge zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wohnhauses in Ostsumatra" /Contributions to the History of the Development of Houses in East Sumatra/, Archiv für Anthropologie /Archive for Anthropology/, Vol. 37, (1910), pp. 11-13, Figure 21.

P. Sarasin in "Über die Entwicklungsgeschichte des griechischen Tempels aus dem Pfahlhause" /History of the Development of the Greek Temple out of the Pile House/, Zeitschrift für Ethnolologie

'[see category 116, page 5.—Analyst]